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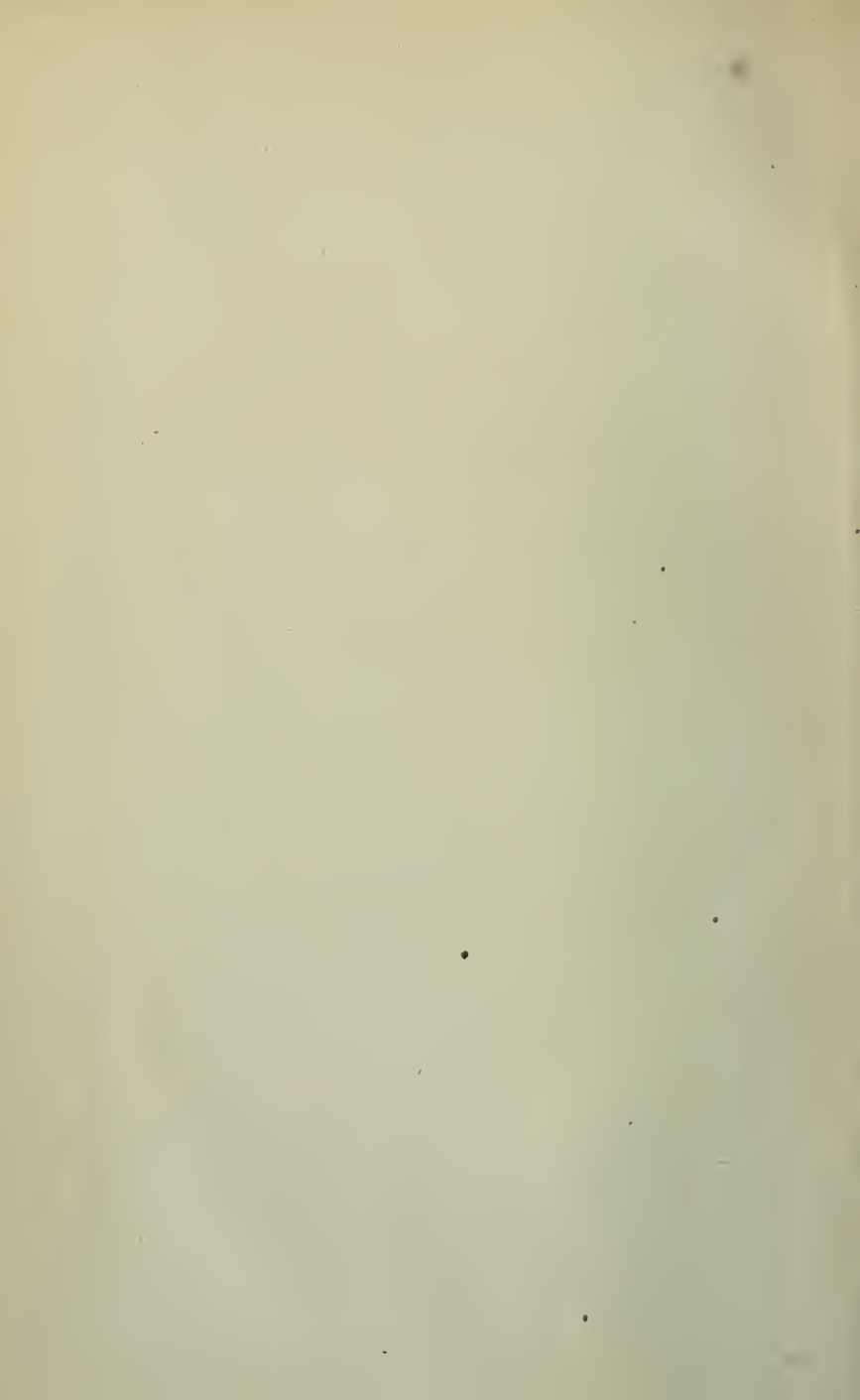
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# The Family,

IN ITS

CIVIL AND CHURCHLY ASPECTS.

AN ESSAY, IN TWO PARTS.

BY  
B. M. PALMER,

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#### NOTE.

THIS little volume has its origin in a series of articles originally published in the columns of the *South Western Presbyterian*. Under the advice of judicious friends, they are gathered in this more enlarged and permanent form. The reader will perceive that it is the mere outline of what might easily be expanded into a treatise. It is brief, because intended simply to be suggestive of general principles.

THE AUTHOR.







Part First.

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THE FAMILY

IN ITS

CIVIL ASPECTS.



## CHAPTER I.

### A GENERAL VIEW OF THE FAMILY.

---

*"God setteth the solitary in families."*—PSALM lxxviii. 6.



THESE words lay bare the principle by which the individual is drawn out from his own seclusion; so that, by the co-existence of many households, society at large may be constituted. The Family, then, may be viewed under several general aspects:

I. AS THE ORIGINAL SOCIETY FROM WHICH THE STATE EMERGES, AND THE CHURCH, AND EVERY OTHER ASSOCIATION KNOWN AMONGST MEN. That it is a Divine ordinance is seen from the law of marriage, the foundation on which it rests. God created first the individual—the man, who was the compendium of all His creative acts—made in His own image, with reason, con-

science and will, and appointed as ruler over the creatures. Then, from his substance an exact counterpart was fashioned, the reflection of his own being; the mode of her derivation establishing identity of nature, and a unity which is not weakened by diversity. When given to him as a helpmeet, these remarkable words are added: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." That is to say, it is the province of the man, as the head of the woman, to step first from the limits of his own home, and to become the founder of a new house. Neither State nor Church could exist, but of materials which the Family affords. Hence, it is historically true, that the Family expands through the tribe into the nation; and the Church has thrice been founded within its bosom. It would be strange, therefore, if, under every Dispensation through which she has passed, this genetic development were not recognized in her organic law, by which the Church and the Family should be ideally associated. The circumcision of the Old Cove-

nant, and the baptism of the New, were obviously intended to fix, in the constitution under which the Church is organized, and in the charter under which she is incorporated, the historical and fundamental fact of her origin, just where the root of human society is found. Equally so with the State. The authority which it wields is first realized in the natural control of the father; and the property which it protects, is first created in the parental provision for the offspring.

But this introduces the second topic:

. II. THAT THE FAMILY IS THE NORMAL SCHOOL IN WHICH SUBJECTION TO LAW IS FIRST TAUGHT. The old theory of the social compact is historically untrue and intrinsically absurd. Apart from other difficulties, it is perfectly clear that no government could be framed strong enough to subdue and control a thousand imperious wills. Even now, with all their training under government and law, men could never be held in check if consolidated in masses. We should be compelled to fall back upon some device like

that of the Family for the purposes of discipline. We must invent the Family, if we did not already have it. God's wisdom is conspicuously illustrated in this arrangement, and we may profitably consider some of its features.

1. *There is the minuteness of the subdivision.* The whole race is broken up into small sections; in which, for a long season, and during the plastic period of youth, a few wills are put under supreme subjection, and the principle of obedience is woven into the character and being of the child. If men were thrown together in large groups from the beginning, it is difficult to see how the necessary subordination could be secured. Certainly the despotism must be very severe, which should at once bring into harmony many discordant wills; and the result could not be attained without serious and permanent injury to the character, which must be bruised and maimed in the very process of subjugation. God's plan is wiser. He breaks the race up into these compact domestic empires, and fits it there for the larger organizations which shall in due time be formed.

Here the supervision is minute and constant, and the central authority bears with an equable pressure upon every member of the little state. The reciprocal influence, too, which these members exert upon each other, is not weakened by diffusion over a large space, but is concentrated within the limits by which it is restrained. The power is less severe, because of the ease and constancy with which it is exercised; and the obedience runs into a fixed habit, before it has the opportunity to remonstrate; whilst the surveillance of a mild and steady police prevents the possibility of combination and intrigue, which are necessary to organized resistance.

2. *Then we have the harshness of authority tempered by parental affection, interposing an effectual check to the abuse of power.* There is authority, indeed, and that in its most absolute form. It must be just this, or it is useless for the end designed; that of first breaking in the will, and making it obedient to law. In this little empire the parent is supreme, and no appeal can lie to a higher tribunal, except

the Divine. The power to enforce is as complete as the authority is absolute. It is a government under which the subjects are helpless, and must either bend or break. Shall we say the trust is too dangerous to be allowed? See how God tempers this authority and checks its abuse, by that wealth of affection which comes in to soften the despotism, and puts the lining of gentleness under the yoke.

3. *Again, two parties, who are the complements of each other, are vested with a joint jurisdiction:* thus anticipating the most refined arrangements of modern civilization, in which, by double legislation in two co-ordinate chambers, the greatest deliberation is secured, and a restraint is imposed upon the absolutism of authority. So here, in this double executive, two wills are united, the exact counterparts of each other, one supplementing what the other lacks. The father's will is robust and unyielding—the granite rock against which the child must rub and be subdued. The mother's will brings in the element of gentleness; and, blending with its co-factor, tones down its severity,



whereby the joint rule is rendered alike strong and loving. Both, too, operate with the uniformity of instinct; and, whilst susceptible of regulation and culture, act spontaneously, and without the consciousness of effort on either side.

4. *Still further, law is presented under every manifestation, and is illustrated by every species of obedience.* It is the model state, with its entire machinery at work. Law is at every moment in force, and takes hold upon every relation at once, to which the homage of obedience is at every point rendered. Law, in its actual and diversified outworking: this is the instructive feature. It could not be more happily illustrated, even though its sphere of operation were broader than it is. It is law in the conjugal relation, beautifully reflected in the reverence of the wife. When it passes down into the second relation of the parent, it has been already exemplified to the child, not only in the headship of the husband, but in the wifely obedience which is its commentary. Before it reaches the relation of the servant, it has

already swept through that of the child; and a double exposition of its nature has been afforded to those who stand at the farthest remove. It gathers up all its honours, at the last, in a three-fold homage, to each of which a distinct expression belongs. It is submission with the wife, whilst the obedience of the son is characteristically distinguished from that of the servant. Could there be a happier institute for the training of men to the duties of society and government than this, in which the subordination is so complete, the law so immediate in its control, the obedience so diverse in its forms, and the whole regulated and sweetened by an affection which renders service a privilege, and duty a pleasure?

III. IN THE FAMILY GOD ILLUSTRATES THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF HIS UNIVERSAL MORAL GOVERNMENT. We scarcely know how to bridle this topic, that it may not branch into too wide a discussion. Let one or two hints be given here, which will need to be reproduced and expanded hereafter.

1. *The most difficult of all problems is to bring into harmony and co operation two or more separate wills, each moving upon its appointed plane.* It was a sublime exercise of wisdom and power when God created the heavens and the earth, impressing upon matter its various properties, and determining the methods by which its imprisoned forces should be developed. But this was as nothing compared with the difficulties which emerge when He created a living soul, made in His own image, endowed with reason, personality and will. Whether we contemplate it in the history of angels or of men, it was a mighty event when a being was fashioned with intelligence and will separate from that of the Creator, moving upon its own plane, under the guidance of his own thought, and under the promptings of his own choice. What shall be the relation of this will to the Will that is higher? And how shall the subordination be maintained, consistently with the spontaneity and freedom of that which is controlled? These are questions upon which are hinged all the problems of Providence and

of Grace; and they have their outworking in the continuous history of both. Angels, who steadfastly held to the allegiance which they owed to Jehovah, and angels who, in the exercise of the same freedom, fell from their loyalty and became apostate, both declare the nature and peril of the problem of separate wills, which must, somehow or other, be coordinated. Man, too, under temptation, fails in the exercise of his personal freedom; and the great mystery of Grace is, how to recover that enslaved and depraved will, and to bring it again into harmony with the will of the Supreme, without controvening the spontaneity of its own determinations. The reader need not be told that we are plunged just here into the entire mystery of the Spirit's work in regeneration and sanctification, in which we are "made willing in the day of His power."

Now, it is exactly this problem that is brought down into the sphere of the Family; where the first stones in the social structure are laid, and the foundation of all government and law is placed, in the subordination of concurrent

wills. There is the will of the husband and wife, the joint rulers over the domestic state; and there is the will of parent and child, in the union of obedience with authority. The great problem of God's sovereign control over the spontaneous will of the creature finds its best illustration within the government of the Family; and we can partly see how power blends with freedom, as the factors of a common product.

2. *There is, again, the supremacy of law, with its natural necessary penalties.* Physical science is more and more enlarging the domain of law in the world of matter, law unfolded within law, as we push our investigations and probe to the bottom the phenomena around us. The same fact obtrudes itself upon those who study the unfoldings of Providence, in the history of individuals and of nations; whilst the entire scheme of Grace, with all its provisions for the redemption of a lost race, founds upon the inexorable character of the moral law, whose last requirement must be met before the sinner can be saved. We shall have occasion to signalize this prevalence of law in the con-

stitution of the household, and in the terms by which its several relations are defined in the Sacred Word. The general suggestion must suffice for the present, reserving the elucidation when it shall re-appear in its concrete connections hereafter.

3. *Equally so with the principle of subordination and dependence, which runs through all nature and grace.* In tracing this as the indispensable prerequisite to harmony in the smallest house, we shall find ourselves always stepping upon the line of—

“That wonderful all-prevalent analogy,  
The arrow of the Great King carved on all the stores of  
His arsenal.”

4. *Finally, we refer to the law of progression, by which lower ends are typical of the higher, and introductory to them.* It is the aim of all true science to disclose this; all the links of creation leading up from lower forms of life to those which are higher, and each, in its turn, affording prophetic intimation of what is to follow. In like manner, a wonderful combination of useful ends pervades the constitu-

tion of the family, springing from each of its complex relations, as the successive arches of a bridge from the buttresses upon which they rest. We shall find this abundantly verified in the exposition upon which we are about to enter, as in the Family we find not only the germ, but also the type, of every moral relation in which we stand to each other in life.

IV. THE FAMILY EQUALLY REFLECTS THE LEADING PRINCIPLES OF GRACE. What shall we say of the great principle of representation, as illustrated in the parental relation? Or that of mediation in suffering and toil, through which the children first live, and afterwards are nourished? Or the mighty power of love, underlying all sacrifices? This view of the domestic economy is by far the most interesting to the Christian; and its development is reserved until we come to consider the churchly aspects of the Family. In this introductory chapter, only those broad suggestions are proper which will serve to vindicate the supreme importance of this primary society, and to jus-

tify the examination of its various relations and duties as they are mapped out to us in the Word of God. These fall naturally into four pairs: of Husband and Wife, in the conjugal relation ; of Parent and Child, in the parental ; of Brother and Sister, in the fraternal ; of Master and Servant, in the magisterial. The consideration of these topics will exhaust what we have to say of the Family in its civil aspect, and will clear the way for the contemplation of the Family in its higher or churchly aspect.







## CHAPTER II.

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# SUPREMACY OF THE HUSBAND.





## CHAPTER II.

### *SUPREMACY OF THE HUSBAND.*

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*"Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."*  
COLOSSIANS iii. 19.



THE first relation in the family is the *conjugal*, by which it is constituted; and since this is dual, that of the husband takes the precedence. It is worthy of special notice that, in all the apostolic injunctions, the great duty enforced upon him is LOVE. In addition to the testimony placed at the head of this chapter, the obligation is more fully expounded in the Epistle to the Ephesians, chap., v. 25, 28, and 33: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies; he that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh;

but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church." "Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself."

But is not love as much the duty of the wife? Nay, in our philosophy, we would antecedently say that it chiefly devolves upon her to be the exponent of its mighty power. It is with some surprise that we find it set home upon the conscience of the husband as his paramount obligation, and we cannot rest until we ascertain the ground of this discrimination. As we advance in this exposition of the relative duties which belong to the household, nothing will arrest the reader's attention more than the precision with which they are severally defined. The terms selected by the Holy Ghost are employed throughout with a rigid and technical application. Evidently they are the exact terms in which to express the character of the relations and the nature of the corresponding obligations. We signalize this fact right here, where it first presents itself to view. The injunction to LOVE is clearly designed to comprehend the entire office of the husband, with its peculiar

functions. Are we able to trace the wisdom of the word?

1. *The husband is the representative and organ of the love in which the conjugal relation has its ground.* It is not necessary to show that love is the element in which the family moves, the atmosphere which sustains its life; or that it is the basis upon which marriage is contracted, and without which it is little better than licensed concubinage. This may be assumed. If enlarged upon, it would only be to lend emphasis to exhortation, which is not at present our aim.

Let it be observed, then, in the order of nature this love begins with the man. He is the chooser; which explains the peculiar language in Genesis ii. 24: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife." It is not put the other way, although in reality it involves a heavier sacrifice when the woman leaves the home of her youth. But it is not her place to take the initiative. Woman must impose a restraint upon her affections, until she is challenged. Like

the violet, she hides her sweetness beneath the leaf, until the hand is stretched to pluck her from concealment. She may arouse the love which shall draw forth her own in absolute response; but that love must first speak from another's lips, of which her own is but the echo. Since, then, this love is first cherished by the man, is first recognized and is first uttered by him, he represents it in its active and controlling power throughout life. His love must always go in the front. As he began, so must he continue to be its exponent and representative. It pertains to his office, as the husband, to lay the foundations of the new society and communion in love; and he is the organ through which it speaks its great commands. There is vast significance in the fact that with him love is a primary duty, binding upon the conscience, and not simply a blind instinct, operating mechanically, like that of the brute. It is a force which he originates, and for the perpetuation of which he is made therefore responsible. It is to be henceforth the law of his life, and the spring of all his actions towards

her who by that love has been won to his embrace. He is constituted the guardian of that in which all true marriage has its life and being.

2. *Man's nature being the rougher of the two, his love needs to be brought under the empire of the will, and to be cultivated as a principle.* The novelist and the poet may treat love as a *sentiment* or as a *passion*; but the moralist must go down to the root out of which both these spring, and recognize it as a *principle*. As such, it may be cultivated: not directly, perhaps, but indirectly; for only thus can the emotions be controlled by a force that lies aback of them, and by a law which makes them dependent upon it for all their manifestations. For example: there is the mighty power of habit, accruing from the repeated exercise of the principle. And where is this more profusely illustrated than in marriage, where the habit of love grows stronger, whilst the mere sentiment becomes weaker? Again, we may compel attention to those personal qualities which first awakened affection; and thus the dying embers may be kindled into as fresh a

flame as when it first burst forth from the deep places of the heart. Again, the conscience may be trained to consider the obligation growing out of our original choice, when we sued for the reciprocation which would render us happy. It must be a cold and ungrateful heart that can resist so constant an appeal to its own generosity. These specifications will suffice to show at least some of the methods by which the principle of love may be made to strike its roots deeper into the heart; which, by the natural law of expansion, will bud into the sentiment, and bloom at length into the full passion, of love. It is well for us that, when the novelty of enjoyment is quenched in the possession, we come, through the controlling power of habit, into a fixed necessity of loving; and the mighty principle lives and works unseen in the depths of our nature, shooting forth new blooms as fast as the old decay and fall.

With woman, by her constitution more gentle and confiding, this may be largely left to the action of her own softer and sweeter in-



stincts. But with man, whose natural roughness might oppose the development, it is ordained that his affections shall be educated by the conscience, and be regulated by the will. By so much the more is he rendered conscious of his responsibility, as the official expounder and guardian of the love on which marriage rests. Of course, nothing that is here written is to be construed as taking woman's reciprocal love out of the sphere of morality, and treating it as simply constitutional and instinctive. Her nature being identical with that of man, as shown in her creation from his side, she comes under the guidance and sanctions of the same laws with him. It is only meant, that what is true of both may be applied with a special emphasis to the man, so far as moral influences may be particularly necessary to the development of his character and the regulation of his conduct.

3. *Man's occupations in life being more diverse than those of woman, may too completely engross his thoughts.* The wife finds her world in the home, the care of which belongs profes-

*sionally* to her. It is her function to preside over it, as it is that of the judge to sit upon the bench, or of an advocate to plead at the bar, or of a merchant to move in the circles of commerce. Sheltered from the ruder cares of life, she breathes the atmosphere of love; and in the constant discharge of its sweet and pleasant duties, is in little danger of escaping from its influence and control. But with man, swallowed up in the details of business, love is apt to prove too much of an episode. Enticed from the soft charities of his home, and pre-occupied with the anxieties and labours of the outside world, his heart is apt to harden under the influences which are so unfavourable to the development of the affections. We cannot, therefore, but approve the wisdom which lays him thus pre-eminently under the law of love, and binds him with its holy obligations.

4. *This injunction determines the nature of his authority, and tempers it with grace.* Under every government, the sovereignty must vest in some recognized head; there must be a last tribunal, beyond which no appeal can lie.

In the supreme sense, this belongs to God alone; but in the Family, which is constituted under His providence, the dread prerogative of representing His power attaches to the husband and the father. He is delegated as the head of the domestic state, and his authority binds the house together. This view of his position is too little considered, yet how it sanctifies every relation and every duty! If he stands as the representative of God to all beneath his sway, with what consideration should he administer his sacred trust! And how is all humiliation taken away from those who obey, when the sceptre to which they bow bears the inscription of the Divine name! In a sense far higher than that of England's great dramatist,

“There's such divinity doth hedge the king,”

whom God hath anointed to be ruler over this little empire. Here is at once the limitation and the grant of his power. The one is folded within the other. If he stands for God in the absoluteness of his rule, then must he take the justice, the tenderness and forbearance.

of the Divine Lawgiver as the tests of his own fidelity. He who rules for God in this primary commonwealth, must himself learn the law of love as the undertone of his own authority. We construe the Apostle's word, not simply as a check against caprice and wilfulness, but as defining the nature of his rule, bringing it into the sphere of grace, and making it the kingdom of love. It is founded upon love, in its origination; it is to be administered in the spirit of love, as the supreme law; and from the husband, standing at the fountain and spring of his solemn headship, flows out this law of love to all under his dominion. In order to this, he is inaugurated into office under the sanction of this great injunction, apart from which he subsides into a tyrant and usurper.

Without penetrating further into the philosophy of the case, the reasons presented above are sufficient to explain the stress which is laid upon the husband's love. The general idea is enforced by the form of the exhortation addressed to him: "*Be not bitter against them.*" We have already remarked the peculiar signifi-

cance of all the terms chosen to express the specific character of these domestic relations. Here it is the word "*bitter*," indicating not so much a special fault to be censured, as the fundamental danger and temptation to which the relation is exposed. The reference is to that authority with which the husband is invested, and the abuse of which is his constant peril. The word "*bitter*" touches this as with the point of a needle; and it may not be amiss to suggest some of the more obvious directions in which, as often from thoughtlessness as through malignity, an abuse of conjugal authority may be a source of bitterness to her who is the subject of it.

1. *There is sometimes a lordly assumption of superiority and depreciation of the wife as inferior.* Nothing can be more galling to her pride. Is it not enough that man is invested with an official supremacy, to which she must pay the homage of reverence, that this must be pushed to the extreme of humiliation? All her instincts revolt against the degradation, which would really unfit her for the duties of her po-

sition. If taken from his very substance, how can she be inferior in dignity of nature? If given back to him as an helpmeet, how can she prove his counterpart, if she be not his equal? How can she be associated with him in a joint rule, if she stand not upon the same level? The fact is, that all comparisons between the two, as to which should be pronounced the worthier, are shallow and impertinent. Each is the best in its place; and neither is perfect without the other. The distinction of sex runs through the entire nature of both, so that they differ as truly in their spiritual, as in their corporeal structure; but this very distinction forbids the comparison between the two. What is called the weakness of woman is really her strength. It springs from the more exquisite delicacy of her organization, both intellectual and physical, by which she is fitted for the more delicate and tender offices which she is called to discharge. The dependence to which all this adapts her is not her degradation, but her glory. It betrays, then, only the folly of him who is unable to distinguish betwixt *subordination* and *inferiority*;

and who fails to remember that subordination in office often obtains where there is absolute equality in rank. There is not a bitterer bitter to a true woman than this disparagement, which degrades her in the eyes of him she is herself bound to honour.

2. *There is also an ostentatious parade of authority, in needless exactions of obedience.*

It is no small proof of the Divine goodness that there is joy in dependence, whenever it runs in the groove which nature has provided for it. But, then, it may be attended with a friction which shall wear out the machinery. There is, indeed, a soft lining under the chains which love puts around the limbs. But even with this, they may be pulled and twisted with a thoughtless roughness, which shall chafe these limbs, and leave unsightly scars where they should only adorn. Even the gentle dependence of woman resents the cowardly tyranny, which wields authority with no other motive than to display the power with which it is grasped.

3. *There is bitterness in withholding the*



*demonstration of love, which is a woman's solace.* She was won by this, and for this left the calmer affections of her childhood's home. It is the tribute due her for the sacrifice ; and there is a sense of outrage and wrong when, on fitting occasions, it is withheld. It is not simply the loss of what she had reckoned as her gain, but a feeling of dishonour in being displaced from the throne of the affections. The obtrusive attentions of courtship were accepted as evidences of a love that would never know abatement ; and the sacred pledge can only be redeemed by a considerate watchfulness through life, which need not degenerate into a fawning uxoriousness to satisfy all the demands of her heart.

4. *It is another form of the same thing, when proper sympathy is refused in her cares.* Man's burden rests upon him in bulk, and the energies of the will are more easily summoned to its support. Woman's lot is not so much one of toil, as of solicitude, which wears her out by the attrition. A kind look, or a soft tone, will be as oil to smooth the rub. It makes



the cross a joy, if it wins love's tribute to love's constant and patient sacrifice.

5. *The withdrawal of society is another bitterness to her*, who needs to build upon it for herself and for her household. Marriage secludes her from the world. It was never meant that home should be her prison, to commune in solitude and silence only with disappointed hopes and blighted joys. It is a clear subversion of her just right, when the deserted wife is reduced to envy the coarser rivals—whether it be an engrossing business, or the frenzy of politics, or the pleasures of the club and the saloon—which have supplanted her in her supremacy.

6. *Worst of all is the bitterness of her soul who mourns over a husband utterly unworthy of her reverence.* If there be a bondage more intolerable than another, it is to serve without affection. But the pang here is that the affection, which once made service a delight, has been killed outright in the woman's soul, and she cannot recall it to life. Her heart is withered within her, and has turned to dust. She is bound by chains stronger than iron to what is

henceforth to her only “a body of death.” And yet, to this loathsome corruption, which breeds offence at every turn, she has vowed the homage of her reverence. But reverence is a thing which must be deserved. It was cheerfully plighted at the marriage altar, when all seemed to be fair and true. Now, when the temptations of sin have drawn away from integrity and honour him whom the law of God and her own choice placed over her as a head, what must be the bitterness of her spirit who finds devotion, esteem, and love melting out of her heart towards one who has so dismally ceased to be for her a covering and a glory !

We cannot pursue these thoughts, which excite at once the twin emotions of indignation and of pity. They have been pushed thus far, only as illustrating the comprehensive designation of the husband’s office by the word LOVE. The dignity and sacredness of the relation are alike expressed by it ; for no higher or more solemn trust can be assigned, than officially to represent this Divine principle just at the point where all human society is found in the germ.

Such, then, is the broad doctrine of the husband's supremacy grounded in love. It receives additional emphasis from the two-fold argument by which the Apostle enforces it upon the conscience. The first is *the consideration of the wife's identity with her husband*. The allusion, of course, is to the mystery of the woman's original derivation from the body of the man. She is, therefore, his other self. "And He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." Genesis ii. 21-23. Though now existing apart from him, with a personality of her own, she is restored by marriage to a mystical re-union with him. The rib, which was taken out of his side, is replaced by the living form which is the complement of himself, so that he "who loveth his wife loveth himself." And as "no man ever hated his own flesh," so in "nourish-

ing and cherishing her," he simply "loves his own body." There is a depth of tenderness in this, which just floods the heart with soft and blessed sympathies. It is love itself which puts the crown of headship upon man; who, in the splendour of this majesty, folds within himself the gentle counterpart of his own being, who wreathes the garland around his brow. She is henceforth one with him in a mystical unity, holier and closer than that which was broken when the flesh was closed over the cleft in his side.

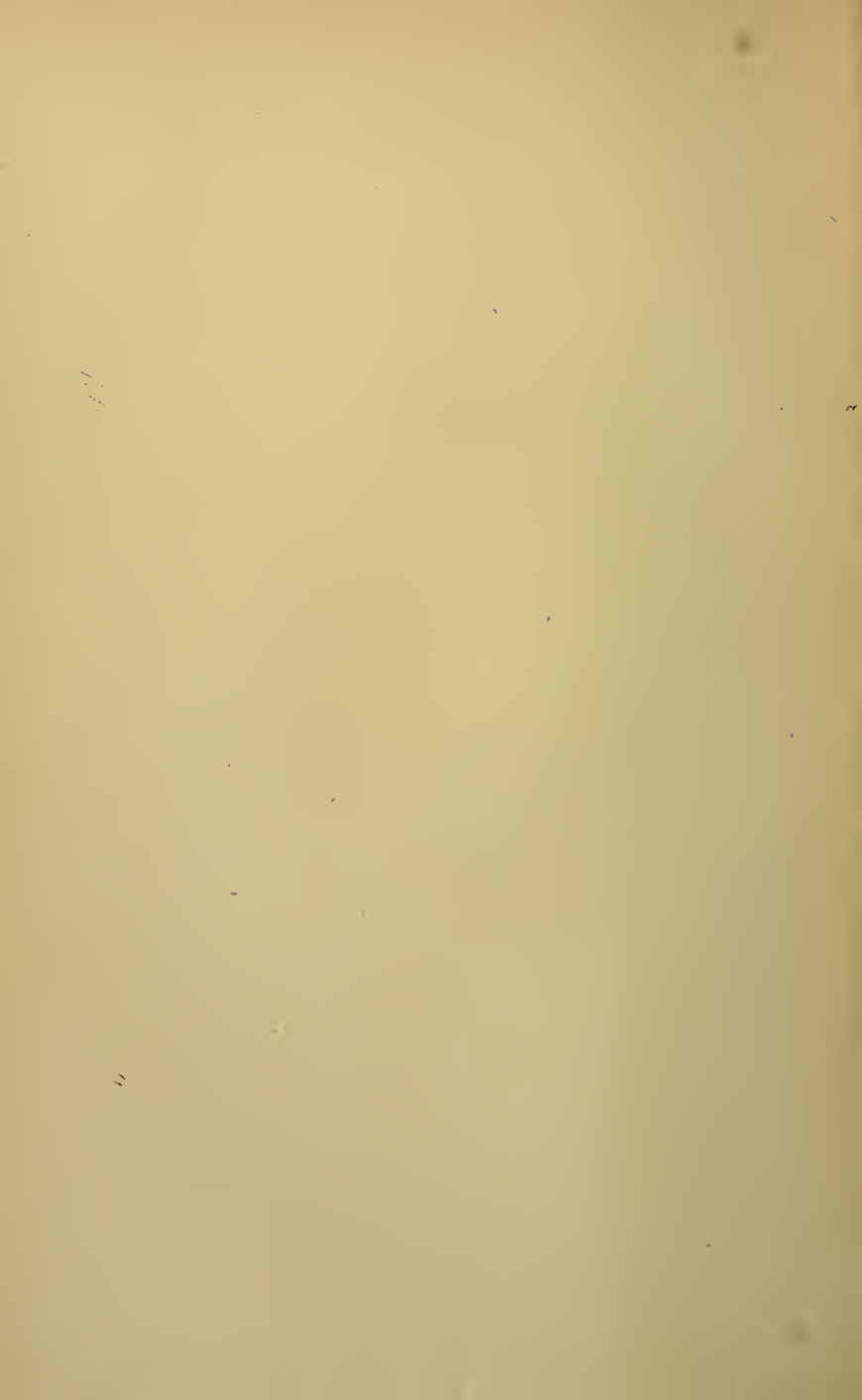
The second argument of the Apostle is *the analogy between the husband's love and that of Christ for the Church*. We can afford here only to skirt the edge of this mystery, which is reserved for a later exposition in another connexion. Were the parallel not suggested in Scripture, we should not ourselves dare to conceive of it; yet in how many striking particulars does it hold good? For example, the free, electing, sovereign love by which we were "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world," to be the subjects of grace, is faintly

shadowed forth in the priority of the husband's love, which pitches upon the one woman out of all her sex, to be his solace and his joy. The continuance of Christ's love, in which, "having loved His own, He loved them to the end," is likewise adumbrated in the law of marriage, which constitutes a union indissoluble until death. Then, the immense sacrifice whereby Christ "gave Himself for the Church," finds its type, indescribably faint, it is true, in the consecration of the husband; when, forsaking all past associations and fellowship, he cleaves unto his wife, and devotes himself to her alone. Still further, the real but mystical union of the believer with Christ, through which he becomes a partaker of His life, found its earliest expression in the mystical union of marriage, wherein the two are made one flesh. Again, the gracious love of Christ with which He "nourishes and cherishes the Church," by the communications of His Spirit, has an earthly illustration in the providence and toil with which the husband feeds, and protects, and comforts her who is supremely dependent upon his care. Lastly,

the aim of Christ, in all this watchful tenderness of His redeeming love, is that He "might sanctify and cleanse the Church," and "present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." In like manner, have we begun to exhaust the significance of marriage, until we comprehend its moral uses in making the parties to the same purer and better, for this life and the life to come? To this end, how incumbent it is upon him whose nature is the stronger, to bring the support of his will, and the clearness of his judgment, and the majesty of his influence, to strengthen and to guide and to uphold her who, by the right of her dependence, leans upon him for all this! And how beneficent is the reciprocal effect of a true conjugai intercourse between the two; when she, by her winning tenderness, softens in him all that is harsh and rough; and he, with his kindly firmness, upholds and trains those pliant graces which bloom the brighter as they twine themselves around his strength! Can higher honour

be placed upon the husband's love, or can its sacredness be expressed with greater emphasis, than by this analogy with the redeeming love of Christ our Lord? Were it always cherished, the husband's supremacy would rest gently upon the wife's obedience: the "yoke would be easy" and "the burden would be light."







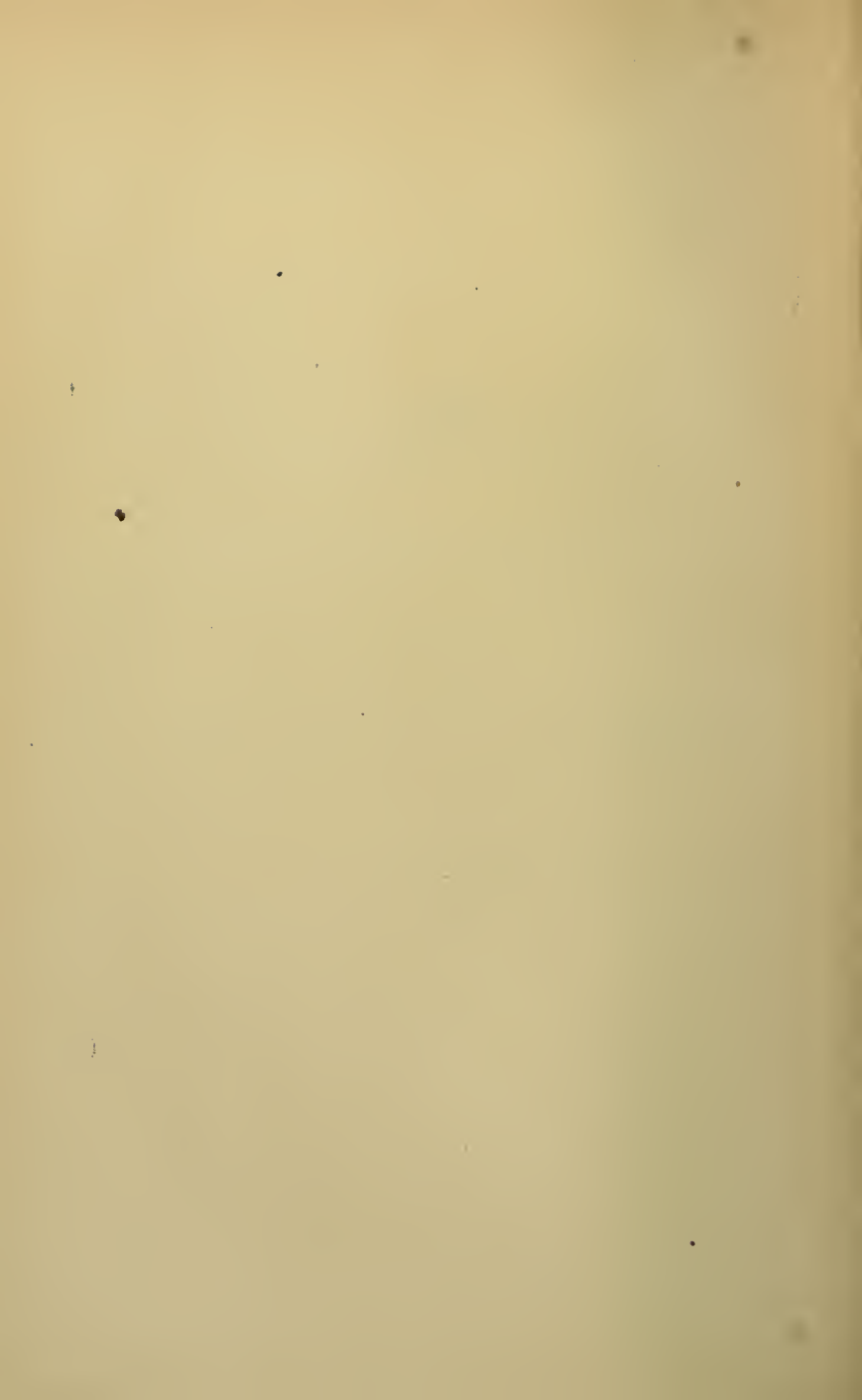


### CHAPTER III.



## SUBORDINATION OF THE WIFE.






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### SUBORDINATION OF THE WIFE.

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“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.”—COLOSSIANS iii. 18.



THE domestic relations are grouped in pairs, with duties, of course, reciprocal. In each case, as we shall continue to see, the nature of the relation, the character of the duties involved, and the temptations by which it is embarrassed, are all covered by a single word. In the present instance that word is *submission*, the full exposition of which will yield all that is incumbent upon the wife. Indeed, we shall find veiled beneath it the entire philosophy of the domestic state. A comparison of passages will show that it is intended to express exactly the co-ordination of the wife with the husband. In Ephesians

v. 22, the injunction is repeated in identical terms: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." In verse 24, the word "subjection," is substituted: "As the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." In verse 33, it is interchanged with the term "reverence:" "and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

In the preceding chapter, the supremacy of the husband was seen to be suggested in a way inconceivably mild—rather hinted, than distinctly affirmed. The word which conveys the power, tones it with a softness that takes off the sharpness of its edge. As soon, however, as we reach below the husband, we touch the relation which is subordinate, and where human authority is, for the first time, to be acknowledged. We encounter now a *second will*; which must move freely upon its own pivot, and yet harmonize with the will which is *first*. We are fairly abreast of the great problem in both law and grace: What shall be the relation between these two wills? How shall

they coalesce, and yet be distinct? How shall one be superior to the other, and both be free? How shall subordination exist, without destroying the spontaneity of that which is controlled?

The reader will observe that the difficulty presents itself in the severest form, just where he first encounters it. The woman, before she became the wife, was, wholly independent of him whose authority she is henceforth to recognize. The relation is grounded simply upon their mutual choice, and does not pre-exist by any connection of blood or birth. In fact, we are just at the point where all human ties find their origin; the conjugal relation being that out of which they spring, and which is necessarily antecedent to them all. The woman must, therefore, relinquish her independence, and must voluntarily assume the obligations for which she exchanges her own freedom. Nay, in framing the contract she appears as the equal of him beneath whose sceptre she consents to bow. The negotiations are transacted with her, not only as independent and free, but as in all respects the peer of her future lord,

until the bond is sealed by which she resigns it all. What still more complicates the case, this equality of rank must be maintained after the union as before ; that, being his counterpart, she may be associated with him in a joint rule. If the husband be king, the wife must sit at his right hand, an acknowledged queen, sharing equally the honours of royalty.

In these particulars, the subordination of the wife differs from that in the other relations of the family. The child, for example, is *born* in a state of dependence, and at the first dawn of intelligence finds itself under subjection. It is called to no surrender of prerogatives, and raises no question as to its station or rank. All this has been antecedently determined, without its voice being heard in the decision. Its will has been manipulated and put under control, before it knew it had a will. The only point it can debate is, whether to continue in this condition of subserviency, or rise in insurrection against authority already established. Not one of the difficulties is presented to it which confront the wife, who must contrive how to be

subordinate, and yet an equal ; how to resign her independence, and yet be free ; how to surrender her will, and yet preserve her personality. It is curious how often in life the solution of a problem springs from the bosom of the perplexity itself. We have been hiding the wife away in a nest of contradictions, and before we have had time to wonder at the complications, she clears them all at a single bound. By one supreme act of will, she cuts through these entanglements at once. It is exactly defined by the word "SUBMISSION," which designates the precise quality of her subordination. This may require a little elucidation.

1. *It is an act of unconstrained choice.* The word "submission" technically expresses this ; it is, therefore, in Scripture the preferred term. Subjection, with which it is sometimes interchanged, is less felicitous ; since it may convey, by association, the idea of compulsion from without. But the freeness of her own choice is signalized in this. In assuming the relation of a wife, the woman surrenders much ; still, it is a surrender. There was a moment when her

independence was undisputed ; if it be resigned, it is through the election of her own will. The considerations which were addressed to her judgment, or to her fancy, led her to prefer the new condition ; where, if her freedom be restrained, certain advantages accrue, which, in her esteem at least, more than compensate its loss. In the comparison between the two, she deliberately chooses to be less free in order to be more happy, and, therefore, she *submits* herself.

In this, there is a manifest reservation of all her original dignity. No sense of degradation can attach in the voluntary surrender of what she might easily have retained ; and in all the friction of will she may hereafter experience, there is a pleasant recurrence to this fact. She retains a sense of freedom in the conscious freeness with which it was resigned, and with which it continues to be resigned. The absolute freedom of her own surrender of freedom comprehends within it all the acts of subsequent submission ; and it makes them as free as the very freedom which she has for ever renounced. So far from being dishonoured in



her subordination, it is throughout life a conscious consecration of herself to the condition of her choice; and the sentiment is one by which she is consciously ennobled.

2. *Woman is led to this submission by the instinct of her nature.* Many things are made easy to us by the dispositions which adapt us to them. It would be the strangest of all omissions, if we should overlook, in this connexion, the different mental and moral organization of the sexes. Man is endowed with attributes which qualify him for his more obtrusive position. He is strong, forceful, massive, fond of adventure, full of dash and courage. The woman is not less equipped for her station by the qualities which distinguish her. She is endued with grace and beauty, to win rather than to subdue; exercising the passive virtues of patience and fortitude, of gentleness and humility; and, above all, crowned with that sense of dependence out of which submission springs as an instinct.

We strike, just here, the principle which determines the whole case. God never meant

the vine to grow, like the oak of the forest, in sturdy independence, buffeting the storm, but to clasp with its tendrils the support given to it; to twine around that oak itself, covering its limbs with rich foliage, and lifting its frail head sometimes even above the rugged strength by which it is upheld. This is more than a figure of rhetoric; it admirably depicts the clinging dependence which is constitutional with woman. As the vine has a root of its own, which is the source of its life, so is the wife rooted in the consciousness of her distinct personality. As the vine grows by the power of a life within itself, so does this personality of the wife find expression in the free exercise of her own volitions. Yet as the vine clings to the rude prop by which it is sustained, so does the gentle will of the wife knit to the will of which her own is the counterpart. Were human nature only in its original and normal state, the two would move together without friction or jar, by a happy coalescence. But in its fallen estate, it must be controlled by positive law, "added because of the transgression" To

the woman it is given in the words, "thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." The collision of will, to which sin now exposes her, is obviated by positive statute, vesting the supremacy where it existed before by the appointment of nature. Just as the law of labour imposes upon fallen man only the industry which was a duty from the beginning, so the law of obedience imposes upon the woman only the subordination which existed from the moment she was created. In the one case, the employment intended only for recreation has deepened into toil; in the other, the submission intended for repose is changed into discipline; but in both alike the curse becomes a blessing, through the patience which willingly accepts it. She was at the first builded out of man; she must now build upon man. Nature itself teaches that the rib must find its place in the side from which it was taken. The ideal unity can only be restored by a mystical blending of the two into one again. The wife only obeys an original instinct in the voluntary submission, which sweetly expresses the harmony of two distinct personalities, and nothing more.

3. *Just here comes in the influence of love, holding them together by its magnetic attraction.* It is God's plan to induce a sense of want, and then, in His providence or grace, to satisfy it. By this means, He combines the human element and the divine in the administration of both. Thus, Adam was made to experience the need of fellowship, as the animals filed before him in pairs to receive their names. To this developed feeling the Lord responds, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him:" and in the strength of this awakened desire, Eve is greeted with the welcome, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." The history pauses, even in its singular brevity, to commemorate the fact that, from the beginning, marriage builds upon a sentiment which can find enjoyment only in fellowship. As we trace the formation of this tie in all generations, the antecedence of love to marriage becomes more conspicuous. Affection is first aroused, and then the relation is established which gives it scope. The secret life of the conjugal bond is

this antecedent love, through which it becomes more than a contract, but rather a true fellowship.

It particularly concerns us, however, to note the influence of sex in determining the quality of this love. Indeed, it does not require the most delicate observation to discover sex in human love, through all the relationships of life. The mystery is no greater than that of sex in intellect, and of sex in character. Mind in woman is essentially the same with mind in man, and is governed by the same fundamental laws; yet who does not know that, in both, its operations are qualified by the influence of sex, which justifies us in speaking of the male and of the female mind? Character is substantively the same in both, including the same elements and requiring the same discipline; yet in both a peculiar shade is imparted by the peculiarities of sex, so that we speak of a masculine and of a feminine character. Equally so with the heart. Love has the same principle or root in both, but is modified in its exercise by the influence of sex.

This constitutional distinction between the two reveals itself more clearly in the affinity which draws them together, and in the specific difference of the affections, as they cross over from the one to the other. No man ever loves one of his own sex, and no woman one of hers, with the precise regard either feels for the other. There is a peculiar quality in the affections when it is interchanged, which nothing will explain but the difference of sex. We shall find this feature running through the family constitution. The father's love for the daughter casts itself into a form which distinguishes it from what is felt to the son. The mother's affection for the son is slightly modified from that she entertains for the daughter. In neither case is it stronger or more sincere. Identical in nature, they differ only in the form in which they are disclosed to consciousness; the same as to substance, different only as to quality. The lines of parental affection cross each other in this way for the purpose of bringing the whole into closer unity. The same principle occurs in the reciprocal influence of

brother and sister ; where, perhaps, by and by, it may receive from us a more articulate exposition. In no relation, however, is the case stronger than where we first encounter it: betwixt the husband and the wife. The husband's love is thoroughly masculine, springing right out of his nature as man—original, challenging, bold—exactly expressing the characteristics of his sex, and befitting his station as the HEAD. The wife's love is as thoroughly feminine, resting upon her nature as woman—gentle, responsive, confiding—finding its best expression in a yielding subordination. The two are reciprocal and complementary. The opposite electricities attract and adjust, by reason of their contradiction. It is not a man's love bargaining with a man's love, so much for so much ; nor a woman's love bargaining with a woman's love, and clashing because they are just alike ; but it is a man's love drawing to itself a woman's love, its opposite and fellow : just not enough alike to clash, and enough alike to coalesce. The husband's strong love rings out its challenging tone, and the wife's responsive



love answers with the echo, which does not know how to contradict the sound by which it was awakened.

4. *Within her sphere the wife wields an original authority, which she acquires through her submission.* This phraseology is not the happiest, but it is the best that occurs to us. Her authority is original in the sense that it belongs to her station, and cannot be divorced from it—not in the sense that it is irresponsible and independent. The supremacy vests elsewhere, within which her orbit must be described. But it is clear the husband and the wife possess each a sphere which is distinct. The man, as husband, father and master, moves upon a plane which is his own; neither his duties nor responsibilities can be transferred. So the woman, as wife and mother and mistress, fills a station which is just as exclusively hers, and her trusts are equally incapable of being delegated. This sphere she must fill with her presence and influence, and within its limits it is her privilege to move unchallenged. In this difference of spheres a relief is found from much



of the peril arising from conflict of will. So long as the boundaries between them are well defined, and neither party is disposed to invade the province assigned by nature to the other, so long will serious collision be forestalled. The danger chiefly lies in the personal relation between the husband and the wife themselves; and there the protection must be found in the principles we have already expounded.

Let it be observed now, that this sphere is hers, as she is the wife; and that all her influence and control within it are acquired through her allegiance to the paramount sovereignty which is vested in her "head." Her submission is, therefore, a source of honour. She is not humiliated by it, but exalted. If, in her person freedom is in any degree curtailed, in her office she has gained dominion and power. It is not a sacrifice without compensation. She resigns independence, but secures control. Viewing her constitution as woman, there is gain in both. In the first, she finds a restful satisfaction in the clinging trust which leans upon a frame stronger than her own. In

the second, that love of influence and power is gratified, which is often an instinct that is noble and good. With her, too, the possession of authority is not burdened with a sole responsibility, but which she divides with him under whom it is exercised. She enjoys the sweetness of office, without being overwhelmed with its solemnity. It is easy thus to see that the submission of the wife, so far from being an act of self-depreciation, is recognized as investing her with special dignity and honour.

5. *Several minor considerations combine to show that there is no derogation from her original dignity in this voluntary subordination.* For example, it is worthy of her most grateful reflection, that she occupies the first human relation in which it is given to illustrate God's mode of solving the grand problem of His universal government over intelligent and responsible beings. In her cordial submission of will, carrying with it the free coalescence of her own individuality with that of another, she becomes the first exponent of the mighty principle by which, through grace, sinful man is restored to

fellowship with God. She is allowed to carry this principle down into all the details of life; and by a thousand acts to show how the will may turn upon its own pivot, and move freely under the law of control. It is a wonderful privilege afforded to her who, "being deceived, was in the transgression," to be called thus openly to assert and illustrate the spontaneous loyalty of a will that perfectly blends with the authority which directs it. Such a mission is immeasurably grander in its proportions, and sweeter in its beneficence, than all the usurped dignities of the unsexed sisterhood who aspire, contrary to nature, to be the competitor and rival of man, rather than his counterpart and helpmeet.

Again: she is prepared for her queenly supremacy as a mother and a mistress, by her subordination as a wife. Indeed, her peculiar influence as a ruler springs out of the fact that, in her higher sphere, she has already illustrated the sweetness of dependence and submission. Her authority is not, like that of the father, naked and hard; but it is authority which has been softened by passing through her obedience, be-

fore it takes hold upon the child. If she demand of those under her jurisdiction subjection of will, she can point to herself in proof that this is perfectly consistent with the highest self-respect. She enjoins nothing which she does not herself hourly practise. Whilst she commands, she leads in the way of obedience. The lesson may not be given in words; but the quick discernment of childhood discovers in all her actions her own deference to a superior will. It is comprehended at a glance, that subordination of office may co-exist with equality of nature, and that submission of will is not equivalent to the renunciation of character. None but the mother can illustrate the obedience which she enforces. As a wife, she has taken off from subjection the suspicion of meanness; and then, as mother, she binds it, ennobled by herself, upon the conscience and heart of her offspring. Like her blessed Master, she has acquired a supremacy through her own submission to authority and law, and has a superior right to enjoin that which she has so supremely honoured in her own subjection. If

stubborn pride should still insist that there is ignominy in submission, her sufficient answer is to point to the great Mediator, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; yet made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death." It is enough for her, if she, like Him, is exalted through submission to a station of privilege and glory.

Reader, is it not beautiful? Well may the Apostle enforce this submission, in the words "AS IT IS FIT IN THE LORD." This two fold motive will require to be divided by us. They are both of them eminent considerations.

"AS IT IS FIT:" *This subordination of the wife is urged upon the ground of its meetness or propriety.* The duty is thus laid upon her conscience, and is not left simply to the operation of instinct. At the very first, the woman did not separately exist. When God executed His counsel to "make man in His image and after His likeness," He created Adam alone. The woman existed as yet only potentially in

the man; and was formed afterwards, by what may be termed a secondary creation, out of his substance. According to nature, then, her being is never to be viewed as apart and by itself; for immediately upon her creation, marriage is instituted, by which, in a higher, because moral sense, she is incorporated with him again. She is returned to him, a separate person, indeed, but with that person so blended with his own, that ideally they are still one as before. The mystery is great, and every reference to it in the Scriptures is as a mystery; yet it manifestly includes that subordination which we have been endeavouring to explain. Her natural condition is that of union with man, as a portion of him. The wife is always the rib; having her true place in the side; again re-included in the man, from whom she was at first taken. In the beautiful language of Matthew Henry, she “was not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side, to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.” Her derivation from man as the rib,

and her restoration to him as the woman, are both to be connected together; and their typical significance is that the union in marriage is the most intimate which can be conceived; that it is spiritual in its nature; and that headship in the one,\* with submission in the other, are the two halves that make up the whole. It is "fit," therefore, that the woman should recognize her subordination, as taught in the history of her own creation; for anything else would be unnatural, monstrous, and grotesque.

\*A curious, but most emphatic, commentary upon the natural supremacy of the husband is found in the old English law, as it came down from the Saxon forefathers, which construed the insurrection of the wife as an act of "petty treason." "This is looked upon," says Blackstone, "as proceeding from the same principle of treachery in private life, as would have urged him who harbours it to have conspired in public against his liege lord and sovereign; and therefore, *for a wife to kill her lord or husband*, a servant his lord or master, and an ecclesiastic his lord or ordinary, these being breaches of the lower allegiance of private and domestic faith, are denominated *petit* treasons." (Sharswood's Blackstone's Commentaries, Book IV. Chap. VI.)



“IN THE LORD,” adds the Apostle. This second motive is even more commanding and ennobling. *It lifts the wife's submission to the plane of a religious consecration to the service of Almighty God.* Indeed, this would seem to flow from the view which we have just presented. For what is obedience to the solemn teachings of nature, but obedience to God? In these fundamental and organic laws of our own mental and moral being—not, of course, as they are now perverted by sin—God has clearly expressed His will for the guidance of the creature. But over and beyond this, God has made the subordination of the wife, and the supremacy of the husband, a part of the constitution of marriage, and has established both by positive statute.

Can there be any degradation in the wife's obedience to the law of her husband, when this is obedience directly rendered to the authority of God? All sense of shame is dissipated, as soon as she rises to this higher view. Her husband becomes to her a crown and a covering, as soon as she sees in him the representa-



tive of God to her. The shadow of his authority falls with no chill upon her heart, when she views it only as the grateful shade from the scorching heats of life. Her subjection to it takes on a religious character. It is of the nature of submission to the Divine sovereignty, of resignation to the Divine will, of obedience to the Divine authority, of rest upon the Divine support, of enjoyment in the Divine fellowship. Blessed idea of marriage, how imperfectly is it realized, even with the best of our race! When the man moves with awe in the majesty of his great trust, tender and loving, full of providential thought and care for those to whom God has appointed him as His own representative! When the woman walks evenly at his side, without fear and without shame; yielding, in the deepest reverence for his authority, but the homage of her worship to that God of whom he is the shadow!





## CHAPTER IV.



# AUTHORITY OF THE PARENT.





## CHAPTER IV.

### AUTHORITY OF THE PARENT.

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*"Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."*—COLOSSIANS iii. 21.



AFTER the conjugal comes the parental relation, presenting the second couplet of reciprocal duties. The parent precedes the child, therefore his office is the first to be considered. And the interesting question meets us at the threshold: why, in the passage at the head of this chapter, and also in the parallel passage in Ephesians vi. 4, the injunction should be laid upon the *father*? Evidently there is intended here no exclusion of the mother, for she is associated with him in a joint rule. The answer is, that it is addressed to him as the head of the household, the official representative of the government within the same.

In the Decalogue, for example, where the law of the parental relation simply is laid down, the two are conjointly recognized in the words "honour thy father and thy mother." But here the Apostle is tracing the different parts of the family constitution, with special reference to the subordination which subsists between them. The injunction is, therefore, carried up to the functionary in whom the authority is primarily lodged. Bearing in mind that the Apostle is stringing together all the relations of the Family upon the one principle around which they crystallize, the omission of the mother in these counsels, evidently designed for parental guidance, is eminently suggestive. With the terseness and brevity so characteristic of the Bible, the generic title of the relation is here pretermitted, lest the subordination of office in the domestic state should be overcast and clouded. In the very form of the language, the responsibility is laid squarely at the source and fountain of the power. But, of course, it descends, by necessary inference, to her whose authority is derived, by association

with him in whom it is original and supreme ; and in the act of assuming it she is gently reminded of the " submission " which marks her position, and through which her own authority has been acquired. Her control, however, is none the less real because it is here conveyed only by implication, or because it is a control which descends to her from a source which is higher.

Let not the reader dismiss this as a mere refinement of thought. Undoubtedly, the father has a natural right to rule, because he *begets*. But so has the mother an equal right, grounded also in nature, because she *produces*. This would yield two wills, both of which are supreme, each resting upon a different basis, and destined to clash through the modifications which attach to both. The Scriptures, however, lift the whole subject to a higher plane, and effect a perfect reconciliation between the two. They teach that the family is a divinely constituted state, in which the parents rule, not simply by natural right, but by an authority immediately delegated from God. Hence, in the moral law,

the Fifth Commandment forms the transition between the two tables, and is the link by which they are connected. Will it not exalt our conceptions of the Family, to see how exactly God has placed it in the bosom of the law? As the root from which all human relations grow, it is the point where the exposition of all our relative duties must begin. And yet this Fifth Commandment springs right out of the first table, as naturally as a new arch rises from the buttress which supports it. We can hardly tell to which of the two tables it most belongs. Clearly to the second, because it defines a human relation, and expounds an earthly duty; but as clearly to the first, because it states a duty that is primarily owed to God. The fact is, when God descends to dwell amongst men, and covers with His law the whole sphere of human duty, He makes His appearance first in the Family. He constitutes the husband His representative to the wife, and the father His representative to the child. The authority is lodged with the male, as generically including the female, from whom, by derivation, she was at



the first created. In marriage, by its fundamental law, she is again integrated into the man, from whose substance she was taken, by the voluntary coalescence of her own will. Through this free "submission," she is one with him in the authority, which comes derivatively to her, as his came from God by immediate delegation. Her natural right, which springs from the fact that she gives birth, is taken up into the right that is supremely bestowed from heaven. Subordination and unity of will are secured; and in this parental injunction, the mother is seated as a queen upon the throne, ruling under the king.

We are brought now to the parental function, expressed, as in the other relations, by a single word, "Fathers, *provoke not*." The language is not only cautionary, but expository. The reference is clearly to the Family as a school for training. Children are given to us, not simply to be enjoyed and caressed, but to be educated—to be educated for this life and for the life to come. The admonition is addressed to parents in a form that at once recognizes the discipli-

nary office with which they are charged, and the peril of miscarriage. Power is a sacred trust, and its abuse is a constant temptation. Beneath the negative style of the admonition we ought to discover a positive principle, made the more impressive from the labour of unearthing it. This positive statement we take to be, that *children should never be thrown into an attitude of antagonism to the parent*. Were this guiding principle carried steadily through the parental administration, it would protect against a thousand errors, and save many a household from the wreck which we are often compelled so sadly to witness. The term used by the Apostle is, of course, a grant of power; and thus it guards against the other extreme of lawlessness and of misrule. But whilst the supremacy is fairly admitted, and its due exercise is, by necessary implication, taught, it is softened by the qualification which is imposed. The rule of the parent is one of law, but of law as tempered with grace. The father must recognize his responsibility to the whole nature of the child, and regard him as a being to be

*moulded* as well as *controlled*. This is the key to the interpretation of the passage. Authority must be used, not only to subdue, but to train. The obedience of the child is to be free and unconstrained, under the promptings of affection. He must not be teased, and worried, and provoked, until he loses heart, and renders an obedience in which there is no soul: "lest they be discouraged," adds the Apostle. In the corresponding passage found in Ephesians vi. 4, the educational office of the parent is more distinctly announced: "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." We regard the expression, then, as defining the *gracious* character of the parent's authority, to be used for edification, and not for destruction.

The splendid advantages for training possessed by the parent diminish by just so much the necessity for bald, external authority. Let these be considered a little, by way of illustrating this position. For example, there is *the long minority of the child*, affording opportunity for a constant and equable pressure in

shaping its character. Time is always an important element in human affairs, but nowhere so important as here. The dominion of the parent, it must be remembered, is strictly a moral one, over a will which must be expected to break forth, from its own spontaneity, in occasional resistance of all control. It is only by degrees the great lesson is acquired, that this will must move in its appointed sphere, defined by proper metes and bounds. The ligature need not be severe, because there is ample time to secure the result more effectually by the interposition of gentle restraints. The object is not to *break* that will, but to *educate* it; not to bind its freedom by external force, but to teach it to control itself. It is enough to swathe it loosely, until it shall learn how to check its own lawlessness. With this a sweet moral influence should blend, until obedience becomes its choice, and it finds its highest freedom in moving upon the plane which law prescribes for its action. If the conflict be renewed a thousand times, still the long minority which nature has provided gives room to patience to

do its gentle but effective work in training what is wild, and rendering it tractable to duty. He is an unwise parent who disregards this assistance of time, and who seeks to carry the will of his child by assault rather than by siege.

It should not be overlooked that other faculties exist besides that of will. There is reason to be developed, affections to be cultivated, conscience to be directed, taste and sensibility to be quickened. These all bring their aid in the discipline of the will, which may be manipulated with caresses as well as bruised with punishment. The silent and steady growth of all these powers together is what the parent is called to foster; and the length of the probation leaves him almost inexcusable, who fails entirely. The case must, at least, be one of inveterate stubbornness which does not yield to the judicious and patient treatment of twenty years.

This process is materially aided by *the extreme dependence of childhood*. The heart must be unfeeling which is not continually

touched by this. Indeed, one of the special perils of the parent is that of swerving from his duty from the tenderness of his sympathies. But what a lever does it put into his hands in the conflict with a child's will? Its helplessness is so complete, and the instinct of it is so strong, that the principle of subjection may be fairly established before a serious purpose of resistance can be formed. The fact is, the parent's trouble arises more from the natural impatience of the child, than from any distinct notion of resistance to authority. This is to be expected from the autonomy of the child's nature, and is far from being in itself an evil omen. It is only when that will is unduly stubborn, and takes on the air of open defiance, that it becomes portentous. But a strong protection against this is the child's own sense of need, which causes it to cling to the parent's protection and care. If early advantage be taken of this instinct, the will may be brought into the habit of submission before the clear consciousness is had that such a faculty exists at all. At this stage the authority may be as

mild as love itself, without impairing its efficiency.

The crown is put upon this thought when we add to it *the natural credulity and homage of childhood*. The ignorance at first is so supreme, that all knowledge must come to it from testimony. No sooner are the senses aroused to observation than they begin to collect the materials of knowledge; and the proverbial credulity of the child is simply a mental instinct, which renders it capable of receiving information. It is a later process when it undertakes to sift this testimony through the faculty of the reason, which is later in being developed. Combine with this the natural reverence of childhood, which bows before the majesty of the parent with something akin to that worship with which we bow before our Maker; and what is to hinder that parent from erecting an altar in the heart of his child, upon which the sacrifice of a daily obedience will be cheerfully offered?

The fact, too, that *they are born at intervals*, and at intervals sufficiently far removed to al-



low the full assertion of parental supremacy, is somewhat significant. The great practical error in family government lies in the almost universal overlooking of this idea ; which, therefore, we express with none the less gravity because the reader will be likely to greet it with a smile. The grand fallacy consists in assuming that the child must know in order to obey, and therefore it must be waited on for the knowledge ere the obedience is exacted. It should obey without knowing. The will and the affections are in exercise before the judgment and the reason. These are to be met at the threshold. At the first dawn of intelligence the child should find itself under authority, and obey by the power of instinct. If the mastery is to be acquired after the will has developed itself in flagrant opposition to authority, the conflict must be proportionally severe, and rarely ends in the parent's acknowledged triumph. We doubt if a child was ever thoroughly conquered after two years of age. Nature has wonderful modes of teaching, if we are only wise enough to take her hint.



*The influence of older children upon the younger* is an important element in family training. The household is a group, and the most wonderful feature in it is the complex influences which are constantly at work. There is always a *first born*; and it is a cruel satire to say that two grown-up persons cannot manage one poor little weakling, whose only resource is to cry, without forging the thunderbolts of Jove. Now, if parental authority be mildly, but firmly, established at the beginning, the contagion of example, and the reflection of authority in the submission of the older, will settle the law at once in the hearts of the younger. It is often alleged that domestic discipline waxes milder with the advancing age of the parent. It ought to be so, in the nature of the case; for with experience comes tact, and the nice sense that avoids unnecessary issues with the child. But the large assistance derived from the trained obedience of older brothers and sisters will go far to explain the difference which is sometimes pointed at a trifle invidiously.

We mention, further, only the immense advantage of *constant supervision*. It is the nearest to omnipresence of any thing purely human. When is the eye of the parent ever withdrawn? How it watches, when itself unseen! A watchfulness, too, so free from espionage, or the scrutiny of a detective! A watchfulness so full of love and tender sympathy and providential care, that the child greets it as a perpetual benediction: greets it as it greets the sunlight of heaven, shining unobtrusive because shining everywhere! This wonderful police in the Family we do not know with what to compare it, except with the surveillance of conscience in the individual breast, so omnipresent, so faithful, so benevolent even in its reproaches.

We signalize only the provision for this in the office of the mother. She, the gentle one, whom nature has made so loving to those born of her body. She, too, who has learned obedience for herself—she has the function of sitting in the midst of her nestlings, that she may be to them a holy providence. Sometimes with a

smile, sometimes with a frown, always watching, soothing, stroking: shaping with her tender hands the hearts which are, by and by, to be so strong for duty.

We see, then, the import of the Apostle's words, "*provoke not*;" that authority is not all a parent has to wield, but influence as well; that when the sceptre of rule is stretched over the domestic state, there may be a cunning which shall wreath it with roses, and conceal its harshness. It remains, then, only to suggest some of the obvious forms under which this "provocation" may lurk.

1. When there is *habitual sternness*, holding the child at bay, and never entering into living sympathy with its joys and sorrows. Sometimes this arises from natural temperament. The parent is constitutionally phlegmatic and cold, and finds nothing more difficult than to break through the reserve which hangs like a veil over his heart. Sometimes it arises from the pre-occupations of business, which absorbs the attention, and draws one off from communion with those about him in life. Some-

times, alas ! it springs from a misdirected conscientiousness, which fears to indulge in pleasantry lest the reins of austerity should escape from the grasp. The more is the pity, when religious principle puts on this authority, and repels where it should draw. It cannot be doubted that many parents, who in all other respects are models of faithfulness, make their piety hateful by clothing it in this ascetic garb. It is a sad loss all round : a loss to the parent, who loses the cream of domestic joy in thus shutting out from his bosom the young prattler, who should make the sweetness of love spring, like honey, out of the rock itself ; and a deeper, sadder loss to the child, who is every day cheated of its birth-right. It is the climax of parental tact, when the faculty is possessed of letting one's self down into the very heart of childhood, in fresh and genial sympathy with all it finds there. Such a parent governs easily and well, and governs almost without curb or rein.

2. The evil is aggravated when *there is a constant and hard exaction of duty*. Oh ! those shadows which fall upon childhood, when

the parental voice is never heard except to issue a command! The case is worse, if the commands and restrictions are capricious. But even when reasonable and just, surely the parent is something more than an overseer. The quick sensibility of a child feels, even where it cannot explain, the wrench in its relations, when it can never come into the father's presence without being ordered off upon some duty. It has an unreasoning instinct, which tells it has sometimes the right to sit down in the light of that father's smile, and rejoice in his love.

3. Greater yet is the discouragement, when *it is greeted with needless and captious criticism*. The dissatisfaction may not always be groundless, nor the censure unmerited. But it is not wise to be on the alert to find fault. Due allowance must be made for the inconsiderateness of youth; and few things provoke resentment more than to be subjected constantly to rigid scrutiny, as under an inspector's drill. It is better to allow the rent in the jacket sleeve, than to make a worse rent in the

boy's heart; who is repelled from a parent, to whom he must give account for every mishap in a boy's rude play. Close akin to this spirit of criticism is the selfish withholding of commendation and praise, where there is an evident desire to please. Even children who are not exact types of youthful piety after the pattern of much of our Sunday School literature, have a great many moments of good humour, when they wish to gratify those about them; and a little judicious praise is a healthy stimulant to virtue. We have known persons, in all the walks of life, to whom it would have proved a wholesome tonic, lifting up the flagging energies to new efforts of goodness in hours of despondency and gloom. Let the child's life be seasoned with a little approbation, and perhaps the path of virtue will not be altogether rugged to its feet.

4. It is a provocation to wrath, when *favouritism is indulged, and disparaging comparisons are drawn*. A child is a child, whatever its natural disposition may be, and it may honestly claim a child's place in the parent's

affection. The jealousy which is aroused by an unjust partiality, burns like a juniper coal in the heart that feels itself cast off; and the odious contrasts which are drawn, are instinctively resented as insults added to wrong. The heart so treated will burn at length to a crisp under the fires of resentment.

5. *Chastisement inflicted in anger, or excessive in degree*, is certainly a just provocation to wrath. The impression of some that chastisement, as such, tends to break the spirit of a child, is contradicted by universal experience. The youthful conscience may safely be trusted to recognize this necessary vindication of parental authority. But this conscience is equally quick to grade the severity of the infliction, and to resent it as the mere expression of ill-temper and spleen. Hence, too, the extreme injury of those modes of punishment which are designed conspicuously to humiliate and to degrade. The parent's office, in this case, is strictly judicial, and must be exercised with transparent fairness and equity. It is not the temporary suffering that bruises the spirit of



a child, but the sense of injustice rankling in the soul. It is doubtful if obedience ought ever to be enforced under a menace. It is thereby robbed of its frankness, and the probation is to that extent unfair. The child should be allowed the privilege of deferring to authority upon the ground of its rightfulness, and of substantiating his obedience as springing from principle. It is then seen to be honourable in its source, and the youthful character is ennobled. Punishment should never be administered in anger, for the simple reason that the principle upon which it turns is withdrawn alike from the view of parent and child. It attests simply the power of the one, and fulfils no office of discipline to the other. There is a clear distinction, which no one is quicker than a child to perceive, between a cool, judicial displeasure, and the passion which wreaks its vengeance upon the helpless.

6. Last of all among these parental provocations, is *the unwise retention of authority when it should gradually give way to persuasion.*



A long season of training is allowed the parent, from infancy to maturity. As the reason expands, and the affections unfold, and the conscience asserts its supremacy, the force of bare authority must slacken. It is a part of the training itself, to throw the eaglets upon their own wing to balance in the air. The youth of sixteen cannot be ruled as the boy of six years; and the parent has missed his chance who is not able, quietly and by degrees, to substitute influence in the place of authority. Of course, wisdom and tact are required in effecting the change. But as the time must come when the exercise of authority shall cease, the manner of its gentle abdication should be the parent's study. And they who seek to perpetuate it in its original cast-iron form, will succeed only in "provoking their children to wrath."







CHAPTER V.



FILIAL OBEDIENCE.





## CHAPTER V.

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*"Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord."*—COLOSSIANS iii. 20.



THE filial relation is correlative with the parental, and comes up next for consideration. It will be observed that the generic title, parent, is here employed. The reason is obvious. The obligation of the child is to both, and it is not required to note any distinction as to their authority. The proper place to mark this is where the authority is conferred; and, as we have already seen, the principle of subordination was secured in the pre-eminence assigned to the father, and in the derivation of power from him to the mother. As to the child, the authority is conjoint, and must be recognized as one. It is easy to see that discord

would be introduced into the administration if the subjects under it were allowed to discriminate between the two. There is now no difference in the complexion of the authority, for the two are blended in the administration. A happy illustration is afforded of the nicety and precision of the language of the Bible, that in all the passages which expound the duties of the child, no distinction is hinted at between the parents ; whilst in the instruction given to the parents themselves, they carefully intimate the supremacy of him who is constituted the head of the household. Thus, in the parallel injunction found in Ephesians vi. 1, 2, it reads, “ Children, obey your parents ;” “ Honour thy father and mother ;” the latter clause being itself a quotation from the Fifth Commandment in the Decalogue. We specify this feature all the more, as it confirms the general interpretation we have given of this domestic code, the principle running through which is the articulation of all the parts into one body, and the consequent subordination between them.

Filial duties are embraced in the single word

“obedience,” which we shall discover to be entirely appropriate, as defining the nature of the relation itself.

We encounter here again the problem of co-ordinated wills. As in our primary relation to God, His will must be supreme, and our will must bow before it in free subserviency to His control over the creature in all things; as in the conjugal tie, the wife must blend her whole being with that of her head, in the voluntary submission of her will to his; so again must the child-will, moving freely upon its own plane, bend before the majesty of the parental. Thus, so far as we have yet traced it, the supremacy of law is upheld, from the throne of Jehovah itself, downward through all the concentric circles of human relationship and of human duty. Will is drawn up, and is enfolded within will; order is maintained throughout by this subordination of the lower to the higher; whilst individual freedom remains to each, in the spontaneity with which the obeisance is rendered. In every case, will turns by its own polarity upon its own pivot, and over the entire sphere

in which it is appointed; whilst it is magnetized by the influence that is above it, and obeys the secret power that points it ever upward to the sphere in which it is taken up.

This subordination is, in each case, expressed by a different word; the wife *submits*, the child *obeys*. The selection is far from being accidental. Both suggest a subjection of will; but, along with this, the peculiar property by which the two are discriminated. It may be worth while to trace this distinction a little further than we have heretofore done. In the conjugal relation, there is absolute *union* between the parties; in the parental, there is simply *connexion*. The woman, by the law of marriage, is reintegrated into the man, from whose side she was originally drawn. She never exists afterward an independent person. By her voluntary act she is merged, civilly and legally, into the man. With her office in the household perfectly defined, her status in the same is determined by her relation to the husband. All her privileges and rights flow to her from this association with her head. There is de-



manded of her, therefore, a blending of the will, which shall, so to speak, make the two organically one. There must be, on her part, a cleaving to him, which shall, in some sort, mingle together their distinct personalities. What term shall express this peculiar coalescence of her will with his? The Scriptures have chosen the word "*submit*," to enunciate its exact character—a blending of the will, not in one or in a thousand of its separate determinations, but in its innermost essence and being. Her will unites with his, not in this and that particular act, but, antecedently to all acts, it blends, as naked will itself, with the will which is its counterpart and fellow. The word "submission" covers this shade of idea: the union of nature, the mixture of being, the blending of personality.

In the filial relation, however, the connection with the parent is inconceivably close, but it is not *union*. In the ideal conception of it the child is separate from the parent, and the distance widens betwixt them, until, at maturity, **the child swings** off upon a path of entire inde-

pendence. Whilst, therefore, the unity of the household must be preserved by a due subordination of will, it is not subordination mounting into actual coalescence. This shade of thought is marked in the word chosen by Inspiration to express it. For "obedience" looks to the acts of the will, rather than to its substance or essence. It recognizes the remoteness of the relation which the child sustains, and signalizes the separateness and independence of its will, which can only be subordinated to that of the parent in the way of external homage. Obedience is not the will consciously blending itself with another will in organic union; but it is will conscious of its separateness, bringing its own acts, and laying them a sacrifice upon the altar of duty.

This little essay proposes only to sketch the outline of the family constitution, and particularly to denote the central principle of subordination, by which all its different relations are adjusted. It would only obscure this design to dwell minutely upon the various duties which are involved. Filial obedience will,

therefore, be discussed only as to its nature, and the ground upon which it rests. We shall thus have a clearer view of the Family as the sphere in which successive generations of men are brought under subjection to law, and are thereby fitted to be useful and happy, both here and hereafter.

1. *Authority is here presented to the conscience as grounded in absolute right.* "Children," says Paul, "obey your parents in the Lord, *for this is right.*" A broad foundation is thus laid, upon which a steady obedience may rest; for the appeal is made to the intelligence and reason, as well as to the conscience and heart of the child. At first, it may be instinctive, or rendered from a sense of helplessness. But as character is formed, the obedience draws deeper, and lays other faculties under requisition. It must express the whole moral nature, just so soon as its attributes come to be developed, and in exact proportion to that development. If the individual will is prone to assert itself, then conscience and judgment fly to the rescue, and plead for the authority as

essentially righteous. No right can be imagined more perfect. It is not an acquired, but a natural right. It is not founded upon purchase or conquest, but upon natural relationship. There is nothing about it accidental or provisional. Its character is absolute. "Hearken to thy father that begat thee," says Solomon, "and she that bare thee shall rejoice." The injunction penetrates to the very fountains of our being. It lays the right supremely in this, that the parent is instrumentally the child's creator. The Scriptures abundantly recognize this representative relationship. The whole human race existed potentially in the loins of Adam, and were dealt with in him. All Israel were in the loins of Abraham, and so became heirs of the promise; and the child is viewed in the loins of its father before it sees the light. It is borne by the mother within the walls of her flesh; and the earliest pulses of the infant heart beat with the power of her life, which it so mysteriously shares. Destined at length to an existence which shall be apart from both, the connexion

is maintained through a period of dependence, during which it still exists, civilly and legally, in them. With this derivation from the parent flows the parent's natural right to rule.

In all these original relations nature has planted the instincts which are necessary to maintain them. In the parent is found what we may concisely term the providential instinct, as strong in man as in the bird that flutters over its brood. In the child exists the instinct of dependence, which cleaves to the protection and care indispensable to its preservation. From the dawn of its reason the child is accustomed to view its state of subordination as in accordance with nature ; and its simple instincts recognize the subjection as fitting and just. The harshness of authority is thus completely removed. The child can have no sense of humiliation in the dependence which is natural to it, and no feeling of degradation in the obedience which this necessitates. All is rendered easy by the instinct of nature in the beginning, and afterward reason and conscience confirm it as right. In truth, the child needs

this authority as a support to its own will when learning how to exercise itself; just as the young eagles fear to trust their own wing at first, and are borne up by the parent bird while practising it upon the air. In this, as in every thing else, the dependent child comes back to the strength and protection whose support it constantly requires; whilst the sweet affections which are engendered in the act of communicating and receiving, make the dependence itself easy and agreeable.

But the parent's right is not only *natural*, *it is supernatural*: it is a right immediately conferred by God. This is implied in the original grant of power to them, and in the limitations which grace imposes in its exercise. It is more distinctly recognized in the injunctions laid upon the child: "Obey your parents *in the Lord*;" and again, "Obey your parents, for this is *well-pleasing unto the Lord*." The religious element of our nature finds, perhaps, its earliest action here. The child must obey for conscience sake, or rise in rebellion against the control which is supreme. Parental

authority being a shadow of the Divine, obedience to it becomes the first act of worship to the Creator. This principle, of course, cannot be expected to operate until the moral nature begins to develope. But as soon as the distinction betwixt right and wrong can be perceived at all, it is recognized just here; and perhaps the very earliest discrimination of the child between the two is made in the light of the parent's commands. When the conscience is so far educated as to recognize the Divine sanction fully, the last vestige of shame is taken away from the obedience rendered. It can be no mortification to the creature to bow before the will of the Infinite Creator, who appoints the parent as His receiver, to gather up the obedience and the worship which are supremely due to Him.

2. *Parental authority is universal in its sweep.* "Obey your parents in all things," is the command. The question, of course, arises whether this is to be construed as strictly literal? With human nature corrupt as it is, may not these parental commands be some-



times immoral? In that case, is not the child shut up between two classes of obligation, both of which appear equally imperative, since both rest upon the same Divine authority? A limitation must exist somewhere; but it must be sought in the law given to the parent, not in the law given to the child. In the first place, all parental authority is delegated; to which, from the nature of the case, a corresponding responsibility attaches. If the parent rules as the representative of God, he must rule according to the will of God. It would be preposterous to plead the Divine sanction in commanding what is in itself sinful. He clearly transcends the bounds of his authority as soon as he clashes with the superior authority which is the source of his own. Even were there no restraining clause defining the extent of his prerogatives, still this qualification must be supposed. Ruling under a law, his authority is vacated whenever the attempt is made to exalt it above that of the Being by whom it was originally conferred. He has been guilty of an act of treason against the supremacy of his King and Lord.



In the next place, the office of the parent as an educator makes him doubly guilty for such an assault upon the moral nature of his ward. He is placed at the fountain head of the child's being, that he may shape its earliest affections and thoughts. His empire over the will is subsidiary to the higher end of developing and training the whole moral nature of his offspring. In the very grant of the jurisdiction, its object is distinctly stated: that he may "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The moral law, which is the inflexible rule of human conduct, must be the text of all parental instructions. To issue commands which are contradictory to this is, therefore, not only a crime against God, but it is a crime against his child. He bruises and maims that nature which was put into his hands, when most supple and plastic, to be moulded aright. He is guilty of such malfeasance in office, as deprives him of all constitutional power in the premises.

Still further, his authority, in this direction, is bridled by the explicit language of the Lawgiver. It is found in the clauses upon which

we have already commented. The father is enjoined "not to provoke." What provocation can be more cruel and unjust than to force one to sin? He is commanded to "bring up his child in the nurture of the Lord." The language to him is the same as that addressed by the daughter of Pharaoh to the mother of Moses: "take this child, and *nurse it for me.*" Not, however, to repeat what we have already said, here again is the restriction inserted in the admonition to children: "Obey your parents *in the Lord.*" "Obey your parents in all things, for *this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*" Evidently, in accepting authority, the parent is bound to look at the entire code in which the reciprocal obligations are stated. In this particular connexion, the Divine will is presented as a motive to filial obedience; but it reflects equally upon parental authority. If the child must "obey in the Lord," the parent must command in the Lord. If the child must obey as "well pleasing to the Lord," the parent is equally to please the Lord in his rule. The two obligations are strictly correlative, and

both come under the same direction and sanction. In no case can the parent plead a divine warrant for obedience in unlawful things. He must rule, and the child must obey, under the law which sets forth the supreme authority of Him who is the Creator and Lord of them both.

This sweeping phrase, "in all things," refers simply to the extent of *proper* parental authority, in regard to which the child is not vested with discretion to judge. It would defeat the end of all law were the subjects under it allowed to decide the question of jurisdiction. The protection against the abuse of power must be found in the guards thrown around the power itself, as we have seen in the charter which vests the parent with all his prerogatives. If his will should, however, deliberately set aside the law of God, which is supreme, and if the child's conscience be sufficiently educated to perceive the issue that is joined, why, then, the case is analogous to what sometimes happens with a people or nation, which is driven by oppression to overturn the despotism; falling back upon rights which antecedently exist by

the gift of God, and which no human government can lawfully contravene. In such a collision, the law of obedience to the child is to obey only *in the Lord*; and the responsibility remains with the parent who has perpetrated the outrage. The resistance in this case seems to us to be grounded upon the same principle with the right of revolution, which is recognized by the law of nature and of nations as inalienable and indestructible. But in setting up a constitutional government for the Family, the broad principle of subordination must be laid down, without weakening its force by considering the exceptional cases of abuse, which are elsewhere provided against. In the exercise of authority which is directly contrary to this constitution, the appeal must be taken to Him who ordained it, that He may restrain or avenge what is treasonable to Himself.

3. *The obedience of childhood is strictly probationary.* It is at first absolute in its character, a mere bending of the will to that which is superior to it. But with opening intelligence, it becomes more and more voluntary, not so

much constrained by the pressure of its own feebleness, as it is prompted by affection, and regulated by conscience. With the greater measure of self-control which is gradually acquired, the force of authority diminishes, until, at mature years, it entirely ceases. The law of obedience is, indeed, at no period of life, exactly cancelled; but it takes the form at length of deferential and worshipful homage of the parent, who is increasingly venerable with age. All these stages, thus briefly sketched, indicate the purpose for which this obedience is enjoined. The great achievement in life is to become the complete masters of ourselves: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city." No one is prepared to assume the trusts of life until the will, which is the executive faculty, is brought under subjection to the reason. Hence the unconditional submission required at the period when the will has to be broken in, and when the instinct of helplessness claims the protection of authority. The two are adjusted to each other with almost mecha-

nical precision. The language of parental discipline is, "take up that will, and hold it in hand." The trial may, perhaps, be severe, as the stubborn conflict with authority sometimes evinces; but as self-mastery is gained through the habit of subordination, the rein is thrown more loosely upon the neck, until it ceases to be drawn at all. Thus the Family is the school in which men are trained for the duties of citizenship; for the strongest government would be shattered in a day, were not the concurrent wills of which it is composed taught how to blend with mutual concessions. The limited duration, and the probationary character of filial obedience, exemplify the principles on which it is based, and reveal the beneficent design of the whole dispensation. So far from degrading in its tendency, its whole aim is to ennoble: to fit the young for the responsibilities and duties which will devolve upon them in after years.

The probation of childhood extends beyond this, and its obedience enters as an element into the formation of religious character. A con-

stant deference must be paid to the wisdom which is higher than its own. There may be questioning enough, but it is without disputation. The parent is the child's oracle, whose decisions are accepted as nearly infallible. Who does not see the influence of this in shaping the religious character? In this sphere, where all rests upon testimony, and in which faith is the fundamental law, a wisdom which is supreme must be accepted as the only guide. The Family fulfils a high function when it disciplines the young spirit, just as it opens its wondering eyes upon all the mysteries of nature and of God, to receive by simple faith what its own ignorance can neither anticipate nor deny. But this thought will re-appear in another connexion, to which it more logically belongs.

4. *God has lent a gracious sanction to filial obedience in the promise appended to it.* It is not the province of law to hold out rewards, except so far as these may be implied in the threat which is its sanction. Law speaks rather with the voice of authority. Its office is not to persuade, but to enjoin. It exhorts no further



than in the appeal which it makes to the self-interest of men. But here, in the centre of the moral law, is a commandment with promise. In the New Testament it is re-engrossed, and stamped with the seal of grace: "that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." As though to add, a deeper emphasis, this obedience is declared to be "well pleasing unto the Lord." One is tempted to speculate upon the reasons for this discrimination. But whatever these may be, it invests the parent's office with equal solemnity and sweetness; with solemnity, because God takes it so immediately under His guardianship; with sweetness, because His smile beams with such open approval of the obedience which is rendered. The homage to the parent, as His representative in the household, is as the incense of worship offered at His altar. It is grateful to Him that the principle of obedience should be early rooted in the soul; which needs but the transforming touch of the Holy Spirit, in the new birth, to become the spring of practical holiness in the believer. And because



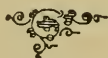
He will be known as the God of our salvation, He throws in this element of grace to soften the discipline of childhood, and sanctifies to spiritual uses the natural relations of the flesh.

The promise itself is abundantly fulfilled in various directions. It may be discovered in that happiness which flows into the child's heart through the submission and service itself. In the goodness of God, the child acquires the great secret of life in its first lesson, that virtue is bliss. A subdued will is the indispensable condition of child-happiness. Its desires are so capricious, and its moods are so changeable, as to be sources of positive torture to it, unless they are constantly controlled by a power that is steadier than its own. In the home it learns that life's pleasure is to be found in the faithful performance of duty, and that self-conquest is indispensable to happiness.

The solid character, moreover, which is formed under this discipline, almost insures the success which is promised. The qualities which are thus matured are precisely those drawn upon in the prosecution of every earthly

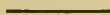
calling, and which will wrest, even from hard fortune itself, a final triumph over all obstacles. Whilst, in addition, the language of the promise conveys an assurance of the Divine blessing. Large observation will astonishingly confirm the testimony, that a dutiful child seldom fails to receive an earthly reward, in the prosperity which a faithful Providence manages to bestow: “that thy days may be long upon the land *which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*”

It is thus easy to see why “obedience” should define the filial relation, and the authority of the parent should lay the foundation of subjection to law, in this world and in the next.





CHAPTER VI.



AUTHORITY OF MASTERS.





## CHAPTER VI.

### AUTHORITY OF MASTERS.

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*"Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."*

COLOSSIANS iv. 1.



THE lowest relation in the domestic state is that of master and servant. The question is not here as to the *form* of the servitude; for the instructions given apply to all forms of it alike. We do not care to perplex this discussion by so much as touching the vexed question of slavery; which, from the statement just made, would only be a digression upon a side issue. The reader would neither be interested nor profited in such an excursion over a field that is both thorny and barren, and sown with the worst passions which fanaticism and bigotry can engender. It is, however, plainly assumed

that, in some one of its many forms, servitude is a permanent relation, in all the conditions of human society. Whether the distinction would have obtained if man had never fallen, it is, perhaps, idle to enquire; since there are no data for speculation as to a state of things to us now only imaginary. We have always supposed it one of those infelicities in life, which could hardly find place in a society absolutely perfect, and among beings who were entirely sinless. We know that it is not the method of grace to take evil out of the world, but to transform it; softening and sanctifying it into a blessing, by making it a part of a general disciplinary scheme, whereby men are fitted for higher destinies in another world. We know that neither poverty, nor pain, nor weakness, nor disease, nor sorrow, is taken away by grace; though all are sanctified into a mighty and loving discipline for good. So servitude, evolving itself from the curse of labour, is simply one of those adjustments of Divine Providence by which the poor find relief from the pressure of their necessities; whilst the rich, by their ex-

emption from the drudgery of life, have leisure to push the world forward in refinement and civilization. What may have been originally an evil, is thus transmuted into an ultimate blessing. A due subordination is preserved between classes, which would otherwise be thrown into sharp antagonism; and a wholesome discipline is provided for training the race for greater happiness beyond the grave. Principles, therefore, must be laid down, by which, through all time, servitude shall be regulated.

It will be perceived, in the outset, not only that this relation is the lowest in the domestic economy, but that it rests upon a different foundation from the others. The reciprocal duties involved in it, are stated in terms which imply that its basis is *interest* rather than *affection*. We do not wish to be understood as intimating that genuine love may not subsist between master and servant. This would be contrary to experience; for even in slavery, the most intense of all the forms of servitude, the strongest attachments were often formed be-

tween the two. It would also be contradictory to that general law of love which underlies all the relations of society. The divine goodness is conspicuously illustrated in this, that in the interlacing of human interests there springs up a mutual sympathy which binds society together, just as the principle of cohesion binds the atoms of matter together in the mass. We mean simply to say that, in the ideal conception of it, the relation has its ground in *mutual advantage*, which holds the two together by the bond of *interest*; thus distinguishing it from the conjugal and the filial relations, which have their origin in an instinctive affection. It is, therefore, a lower relation in every sense; not only as being more remote, but as being inferior in degree.

Perhaps this will explain why the instructions which regulate it are given in a more amplified form than in the other two cases. In them much might be left to the operation of natural love, the element in which they exist; whilst the absence of this controlling sentiment makes it necessary, in the servile relation, to appeal



with greater emphasis to the principle of justice innate in the human heart. The fact itself is, however, a little curious, that, in the higher and more solemn relations of the family, a hint and caution should be deemed sufficient; but in this, where lower interests are involved, that a full exposition of duties should be required, and a more direct reference to a future judgment should be made the sanction by which these are bound upon the conscience. We have already quoted at the head of this chapter the words of the Apostle, as found in the Epistle to the Colossians. The injunction is not less solemn in Ephesians vi. 9: "Ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with Him." The amplification is still greater in the counsels addressed to the servant, as we shall see in the next chapter. Evidently, there is far more danger of the abuse of power where the subject is so far removed from him who wields it; and more danger of insurrection against authority, where this is not enforced

by a natural and loving dependence. Law must, therefore, throw its guards more carefully around both, as in each of the Epistles to which reference has been made above.

In both we have a complete ethical code, in which the Family is represented as an empire under law. The husband rules, the wife submits; the father commands, the child obeys; the master reigns, the servant ministers. The authority is supreme throughout, and yet is guarded against abuse: in the husband, against bitterness; in the father, against harshness; in the master, against unfairness. The wife is dissuaded from rebellion; the child, from disobedience; the servant, from eye-service. But law prevails throughout, asserting supremacy and enforcing subordination. It is with this fundamental conception of the Family before us, that we must consider all the relations defined, and all the duties enjoined.

In this third couplet we begin naturally with those of the master. Here, again, all duty is resolved into a single principle, expressed in a word happily chosen: "Give that which

is *just and equal*." The principle, then, is that of simple *justice*, and of justice as it is tempered with *equity*. This, we think, exactly renders the meaning of the injunction. The use of the word "equal," in this connexion, cannot imply an equality of rank between the parties; for this would annihilate the relation which it is proposed to regulate. It imports rather the rendering to the servant what is right and proper in the circumstances of his station. It is what Calvin happily denominates the *jus analogum*: "the analogical or distributive right; that is to say, which is regulated and proportioned according to the circumstances, station, or calling of individuals." It is what Eadie accurately expresses, when he says: "Right and duty should be of equal measurement; the elements of service have a claim on equal elements of mastership." In the reciprocal relationship, reciprocal rights are involved. The master, whilst asserting his own, must respect those of the servant; and in the spirit of equity he must give to him all to which he in his position is entitled. Thus the royal law is

fulfilled, of doing unto others what we would desire others should do unto us.

Three important checks are imposed upon the supremacy of the master: we will not say in the Christian idea of it; for though enforced by religion, they both lie fundamentally in the relation itself; and guilt is contracted whenever they are violated.

I. The first is, that THE MASTER IS REQUIRED TO DECIDE, WITH JUDICIAL IMPARTIALTY, THE EXTENT OF HIS OWN OBLIGATIONS IN THE PREMISES. He is, in every instance, to give that which is "just and equal;" but what this precisely is, the law does not undertake to determine. Indeed, in the shifting conditions of human society, this would be simply impossible. What would be "just and equal" in one set of circumstances, would be unjust and partial in another. If this were to be settled by one sweeping act of legislation, it would operate harshness and wrong in the great majority of cases. It must be remembered, too, that under a dispensation of grace, such as ours, the government cannot be one of naked and hard law. Such an ar-

rangement would not be suited for the development of character, and the gradual elevation of its tone. General principles must be laid down for human guidance in all the relations of life ; and the moral training largely consists in the application of these to special cases as they arise. If, then, as we have steadily maintained, the Family is an institute designed to educate all the members of which it is composed, we may expect just such a general code as that we find : not split into minute statutes, but consisting of broad principles, in the right application of which constant wisdom and prudence will be required. Thus, the whole matter we are now considering is carried at once into the court of conscience. From this high tribunal the master himself, clothed with all the responsibility of a judge, pronounces upon the claim that is brought before him ; and though a party to the case, it is no slight restraint that he is put upon his integrity to render a decision which is fair.

The feature last named may be plausibly urged as an objection. It may be asked,

when was it ever safe to allow the executive to determine the extent of his own prerogative? Has not the lust of dominion always proved too strong for any restraints, except those of positive law? If this discretion be vested in the ruler, will not power steadily encroach upon the rights and liberties of the subject? Admitting the force of all these interrogatories, it may be asked where, then, in the domestic state, shall this discretion be vested? There are but two parties, the master and the servant. If the decision be not committed to the former, it must be entrusted to the latter. But this would introduce anarchy into the bosom of the law, which is ordained to prevent it. The servant is as much under the bias of selfishness as the master; with even stronger temptations to abuse his privilege, from indolence, ignorance, and caprice. It will appear, too, a little later, that, in such a case, the master would have less protection against the encroachment of the servant, than the servant has against the exaction of the master. All history proves that the worst state of society is that in which the ser-

vile order has the power of determining its conditions. The spirit of anarchy and insubordination works a wider and a deeper mischief than the abuse of power. This comes to a head at last, and breaks down under its own imperiousness, in the unequal conflict between the few and the many; but that upheaves the foundation of government and law, from which there is no escape but by a reaction into unlimited despotism.

In this connexion, let the fundamental conception of the family be recalled, as the primary state instituted for the purpose of establishing order. It is the first government under which will is placed, that it may be broken in and taught obedience. This beneficent design is frustrated, if the paramount idea be not that of subordination to authority. Hence the headship is fixed in the husband over the wife, in the father over the child, and by necessary consequence in the master over the servant. In no other way can the supremacy be preserved; which, once broken down, the Family is destroyed; and with it vanishes the



last hope of order, government, and law in society at large. In conformity with the original design of the Family, it must be the function of the master to determine the measure of his own obligations. This is done under a written constitution, defining the nature of his jurisdiction, and placing him under the pressure of a judicial responsibility to do always that which is "just and equal." This erection of conscience into a court, under whose sanction the decision is in every instance rendered, is a valuable restraint against the abuse of power. Other guards remain to be indicated. But whether they prove effectual or not, there is no alternative but to place the responsibility where it is, and to surround it with such precautions as the nature of the relation will admit.

II. The second check is, THAT THIS AUTHORITY IS NOT WHOLLY IRRESPONSIBLE, BUT MUST BE EXERCISED IN VIEW OF A FUTURE RECKONING. The Apostle enforces his admonition with the words, "Knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven;" to which he adds, in another place, "Neither is there respect of persons with Him."



Not only is the master put upon his conscience to do all that is fair, but this conscience is stimulated by the consideration that he and his dependants are equally under the law of a superior; and that, in the sight of the great Creator and Ruler, all these artificial distinctions disappear. However His providence may allot the different spheres in which His creatures move, He has annexed specific obligations to every relation in which they stand to each other; and will institute a strict inquiry, at last, as to the fidelity with which they have severally been fulfilled. In the vast remove at which they are placed from Him, they are all viewed as upon one common plane, between whom no unjust discrimination will ever be made. Thus does the Bible, in its ethical code, supply the principles by which these different ranks are to be controlled. So far as they are applied, they arrest that fearful conflict which, as civilization advances, waxes more fierce between the antagonist elements in human society. A curb is put upon that intense selfishness which would take advantage of the necessities

of the poor, to "oppress the hireling in his wages." It strikes at the root of that wild agrarianism which would level all distinctions, by subordinating the parts to each other, and binding them together in true community of interest. The social evils which, in our day, threaten the existence of all order and law, would find an easy solution in this principle of mutual justice under the administration of equity, tempering the hardness of the one with the gentleness of the other.

III. The third check may not be so solemn as the preceding, yet practically as operative; it is THE INTEREST WHICH THE TWO PARTIES HAVE, EACH IN THE PROSPERITY OF THE OTHER. This influence is more immediate and more obvious than the other two, and does not require the same degree of culture to be felt. The poor need employment for their maintenance, and the rich require service for their comfort. Neither can dispense with the other, and both are honourable in their place. An important qualification is thus put upon the absoluteness of the master's control. His interest suffers

as soon as he becomes unjust. Even involuntary servitude has this remarkable compensation for the loss of personal freedom. The slave is the owner's money. Every consideration of interest binds the master to promote his well being. Food, shelter, clothing, care in sickness, the protection of his children, all the essential wants of the labourer are brought under the operation of this motive, which is the most controlling in human life. Considering that the vast majority of the race spend their days in a scramble for bare subsistence, these compensations are far from being inconsiderable. That the slave may live as long as possible, that he may be preserved in health and vigour, nay, that he should be contented and happy in his lot; all this is necessary that the owner may have a return from the investment he has made. In this case, the labour is capital; and is protected with all the anxiety with which the latter is husbanded. Of course, there will be instances in which passion proves stronger than interest, and power will be abused, as in every other relation between man and man.

Still, for the constancy and force with which it operates, no motive can be substituted for that of interest in regulating the ordinary affairs of society.

In the servitude which is voluntary this powerful protection, though more uncertain, is not entirely withdrawn: Wisdom will always teach that one is best served from affection, which must not be estranged by unfair treatment. Should this, however, be experienced, the servant may easily remove himself, and attach to another master. The oppression is not like that sometimes endured in the state, from whose jurisdiction the citizen may not be able to escape. The hardship is less than that of the child who suffers under the hand of a harsh and tyrannical parent. As the community is composed of many families, each independent of every other, the aggrieved servant has but to transfer his connexion where his rights will be more fully respected. It was in this particular that we represented the servant as being more fully protected than the master. Both have this resource; the master may dismiss the

servant, and the latter may discontinue the service, each at his own pleasure. The only real danger arises from combinations on either side against the other; and the temptation to this is far stronger with the employee than with the employer. As to the latter, the iniquity is so palpable of conspiring to deprive any of their just rights, that combinations are formed with difficulty, and are incapable of continuance. Whereas, there is a feeling of honour in the efforts of the class that is lower to struggle upward towards equality with the higher. The moral sense is not shocked with any scheme which promises to extend its privileges; whilst every successful encroachment only prepares the way for another, until all distinctions shall gradually disappear. For this reason, it is necessary to put the interpretation and decision of these reciprocal obligations, just where the Bible does, in the hands of the governing power. Even though individual instances of wrong should occur, the evil to society is less than to have the foundations of all order and

rule broken up by the spirit of faction and disobedience.

This injunction to the master has its applications in several directions. To do that which is "just and equal" involves—

1. *An adequate provision for the servant's maintenance.* This holds as to servitude in any of its forms, both voluntary and involuntary; under a system of apprenticeship and contract, as well as in slavery. The original curse, pronounced upon the first transgression, wraps up a promise in the bosom of the denunciation, "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread," The language certainly implies that, if man be doomed to labour, he shall at least live by that labour. With the multiplication of the arts by which labour is cheapened, nay, by which iron arms and hands are made the substitute for human muscle and strength, wealth is more and more accumulating in the hands of the few, and the distance is widening betwixt capital and labour. The great peril of our modern civilization lies in this direction; and the spectre which is haunting

the mind of the statesman, is the gradual and steady approach to that crisis when labour shall be utterly unable to procure a bare subsistence. Nothing will stand when the point of starvation is reached by the masses in society. The only remedy is found in this law of equity which the Bible lays upon the conscience of the master. The servant is entitled to maintenance, and wages cannot be reduced below the point of a decent support. If this fundamental law be disobeyed, the retribution may be slow, but it will be only the more terrible in its fury when it breaks upon society at the last.

2. *The master's authority must be considerably exercised, to remove, as far as possible, all irritation from the servitude.* "Forbearing threatening," says the Apostle. It is a special caution thrown into the body of the law, securing to the servant that regard to his sensibilities and feelings due to him as a fellow-being. Measured and merited reproof does not fall within the prohibition: for this is among the things that are "just and equal," and is one of the penalties by which authority



is vindicated. But it should be impartial and judicial in its tone ; never the offspring of petulance and spleen, and still less the capricious and tyrannical exhibition of the lust of power. Blessed be the law, and the interpretation thereof, which cuts out the tongues of all the scolds upon the face of the earth !

3. *The obligation is imposed of supplying to the servant those religious privileges which will meet the necessities of his spiritual nature.* The servant, like the master, is immortal, and both are hastening to eternity. The right to serve and to enjoy God is the highest of human rights, as it is the highest of human duties. No social arrangements can dispense with either. And by just so much as men are cut off by their position from promotion in this world, does the Holy Spirit often draw up the thoughts to the crowns and to the thrones in heaven. By just so much as the servant is brought under the influence, and is dependant upon the care, of the master, is the responsibility increased to promote his spiritual well-being. Pre-eminent above the wants of the



body are the interests of the soul. It is but "just and equal" that the servant shall enjoy his Sabbaths, and all the privileges of the sanctuary, that he may at length lay down the yoke of service among the palm-bearers before the throne.

We cannot close this exposition without indicating the extent to which the above principles reach. True, it is only the application of the royal law to one of the domestic relations. But there are many kinds of masters and of servants; there is the mechanic and his apprentice, the farmer and his day-labourer, the merchant and his clerk, the property holder and his steward; in short, every relation in which service is rendered by contract, all are brought under the operation of this injunction to do that which is "just and equal." The employee comes under the same obligation as the master, in all cases where, as a master, he claims the right to command and to control the service which is performed. He is bound to estimate at a fair valuation these services, and to reward them accordingly. He who takes

advantage of the necessities of the artisan, and fails to remunerate according to the value of the work done, and pinches the labour down to the starvation point, is an offender against this law. The merchant who withholds a living compensation from the clerks in his employment, is an offender against this law. All are entitled to live by their labour; and it is the most cruel and guilty species of cannibalism, when one man fattens upon the flesh and blood and sweat and toil of starving labour. What a quiet but solid check does the Divine law place upon the exactions of wealth! And how soon is the friction between capital and labour eased, as soon as equity takes the place of expediency, and conscience interprets the commercial law of supply and demand!





## CHAPTER VII.

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# SUBJECTION OF SERVANTS.





## CHAPTER VII.

### SUBJECTION OF SERVANTS.

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*"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh."*—COLOSSIANS iii. 22.



THE relation of master and servant, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, rests upon the solid basis of *reciprocal interest*. After the curse had fallen upon guilty man, by which he is compelled to wrestle for his subsistence, servitude comes in as a providential method of bringing the rich and the poor together in mutual advantage. It is a merciful arrangement by which the superfluity of the one passes over to meet the necessity of the other, and a hidden harmony is evoked from the very discord of society. Classes, which would otherwise be arrayed against each other in fierce

antagonism, are thus brought together in the reconciliation of interest. The unity of the social fabric is restored, in the community established between its parts. Of course, the adjustment must be effected first of all in the Family, as being the first society that exists; from which it diffuses itself, by an easy and natural transition, into all the relations of the wider society into which the Family itself expands. So long as this remains a sinful world, where man is under discipline for a holier and happier life hereafter, just so long must servitude, in some one of its diversified forms, continue to be a permanent relation; and in the Family, where human authority is first enforced, must the conditions of servitude first be regulated. The great principles upon which it rests being fully recognized there, will be carried over, by a necessary application, to every conceivable relation in which man renders service to his fellow-man upon the earth.

We beg the reader not to be offended with the reiteration of this sentiment; since it is precisely here we are to find the solution of

those vexatious problems which continually threaten the existence of social order. Plainly, society cannot hold together unless the opposing interests of men can be reconciled in some good degree. In the general law of servitude that obtains in the domestic economy, God has established the only principles by which these jarring interests of society, in all its ramifications, can be adjusted. There are reciprocal rights in this relation, which need to be defined; and mutual obligations, which require to be enforced; and when these are clearly perceived, nothing remains but the extension of the comprehensive principle, wherever it will apply in life.

For this purpose, the instructions are given here in an amplified form. We have already shown the necessity for this. In the absence of those instinctive affections, which in the other relations of the Family interpose a powerful check against tyranny and wrong, the law must more fully and explicitly set forth the principle of justice upon which this relation particularly rests. Hence, in the Epistle to the

Colossians, the servant is taught the nature of his duties in these large terms: "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons." Chap. iii. 22-25. These injunctions are repeated in almost identical terms in Ephesians vi. 5-8: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." At the risk of a little repetition, we have engrossed both these



passages; because there are clauses in one not found in the other, and they are mutually explanatory. We are able to deduce from them the precise attitude in which the two parties stand to each other, the nature of their reciprocal obligations, the spirit in which they are to be fulfilled, the protection against the abuse of power, and the elements which ennoble service.

I. First of all, THERE IS THE ASSERTION OF PARAMOUNT AUTHORITY IN THE ONE, WHICH PEREMPTORILY CHALLENGES OBEDIENCE FROM THE OTHER. It is noticeable, too, that the duty of the servant is expressed in the same terms with that of the child; and in both the command is apparently absolute: "*obey in all things.*" There are checks, indeed, which restrain this absolutism; and it is important to emphasize this, as well as the place where these checks are imposed. We had occasion to indicate this, when treating of the filial relation. It challenges the closer attention here, from the stronger terms in which subjection is made the condition of the servant. Whatever protection may be

afforded against the abuse of authority, is not to be found in the law as expounded to him, except that there is an oblique reference to it, thrown in, as it were, to reassure his confidence. In the statement of a broad principle, the effect would be weakened by interposing the exceptional cases which may arise in its unrighteous application, and which are to be provided for elsewhere. This is simply the enforcement of a general duty upon the conscience alike of servant and child ; and as this duty springs out of the relation itself, neither of the two is permitted to sit in judgment upon its propriety. Both being alike dependent, and equally under jurisdiction, the duty is theirs of unquestioning obedience. To the master and the father belongs the prerogative of command ; which it is not simply his privilege, but his duty, to enforce, under the sanction of the authority with which he is invested. Just here are found the guards which are needed against the abuse of power : not in the instructions which regulate the duties of the subordinate, but in the restraints which are laid upon the authority that

is delegated. In the case of the father, supreme control is limited by the caution, "provoke not your children to wrath;" in the case of the master, by the injunction, "give unto your servants that which is just and equal." The law which delegates the power limits its exercise. To the father, for example, power is entrusted to enforce obedience; but with the implied reservation that there shall be no invasion of those just rights which in the filial relation pertain to the child. So the master has authority to command the servant, but only in the sphere of justice and equity; he must not fail, in the exercise of his magistracy, to do that which is "just and equal." These injunctions correspond exactly, and explain each other. The meaning of the law is simply this: within the sphere of these relations respectively obedience is to be exacted, and is to be rendered upon the ground of right; and for the determination of this, the party to whom the administration of the law is committed is invested with judicial powers, and is bound under judicial sanctions to decide. If he be guilty

of malfeasance in office; if he transcends, as magistrate, that law which he, as judge, expounds; then the case is taken up by natural and necessary appeal to the supreme authority, which shall revoke the decision unlawfully and unconstitutionally rendered. Under these admitted limitations, which spring out of the relation equally with the power which they qualify, the law of servitude is simple submission of the will to the authority which is constituted over it. Thus, in the Family, which is the germ of all society, God erects a solid bulwark against the anarchy and misrule which, in the convulsions of human governments, so often sweep over the world.

II. In the second place, THERE ARE ALLEVIATIONS SUGGESTED WHICH ABATE THE HARDNESS OF SERVICE. The eye moistens at this gracious tenderness, which drops a balm into the lowest and the coldest of human relationships. Doubtless it is felt an infelicity to serve. It is much sweeter, at least we are apt to think so, it is much more to our natural taste, to command them to obey. If we could see and know all,

from the beginning to the end, perhaps we would often reverse this judgment. But as it is, those who are at the bottom of the social scale are often tempted to look up with envy of those who seem to sit on softer cushions above them. Therefore, He whose name is Love lines the yoke of servitude with a blessing that is its own, that the spirit may not be bruised. This thought branches into several particulars.

1. There is a swift reference to the *temporary duration* of the servitude, in the words, "Your masters according to the flesh." Oh! the wonderful double-sidedness of Scripture language! Here is a phrase which seems merely to describe the master as being of the human race. Yet it is cast in such a form as sweetly to suggest that the subordination is limited to this earthly state; whilst above, there will be found a better society, in which these artificial distinctions forever disappear. All the allusions which are made to the great hereafter, in the several clauses of the Scripture passages we have cited, cut a vista through the thickets of worldly care and toil, present

ing in the long perspective the rest to be enjoyed at the end. If there be bitterness in the service, it is more easily borne in the constant anticipation of a brighter destiny soon to be achieved. Under this support, the character is preserved from abrasion under the mortifications which are seen to be brief.

2. *A promise of reward is held out in terms which are eminently suggestive.* In Colossians it is definitely addressed to Christian hope: "Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ." Even though servants, yet are they the Lord's freemen. Equally with their masters adopted into the family of God, with whom "there is no respect of persons," they are equally entitled to the "inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus." With what serenity does the gospel teach men to disregard the differences of earthly fortune, in view of those splendid prizes which grace will distribute to all alike who have faithfully served God in their lot! "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

Art thou called, being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant," (1 Cor. vii. 20-22.) Both are alike free in Christ, who breaks for both the yoke of sin and death; both are alike servants of Christ, to keep His commandments; and to both the same prospect of eternal glory is held out as the reward of their fidelity. Just in so far, then, as a Christian faith lays hold upon the promises of the gospel, the servant finds in these the balm of every sorrow.

In Ephesians, this promise of reward is conveyed in language somewhat more general: "Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." In the exercise of distributive justice, or in the dispensation of gracious favour, God will be found no respecter of persons. It is not improbable that in the future world large compensation will be provided for the trials of those whom



God in His sovereignty calls here on earth to glorify Him through patience and sorrow. Their lot here was made severe, in order "that the works of God should be made manifest in them." Will He then forget "their labour of love and patience of hope," when in the midst of the fires they have borne a constant testimony to His name? Will there be no proportion between the humiliation here and the exaltation there? It may be that, in the day of reckoning and adjustment, there will be a surprising reversal of positions, when the Master of the feast shall say to one and another of earth's lowly children, "Friend, come up higher," whilst many of the honourable and counsellors shall "begin with shame to take the lowest room." There may be an emphasis which we have never conceived in the words of the ancient prophet, when they come to be repeated on that day: "Thus saith the Lord God, remove the diadem and take off the crown; this shall not be the same; exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high." (Ezekiel xxi. 26.)

III. THE SELF-RESPECT OF THE SERVANT IS



CAUTIOUSLY PROTECTED, EVEN IN THE ABSOLUTE OBEEDIENCE ENJOINED.

Without this, a shadow of immorality might seem to rest upon a relation into which an abject submission enters as an element. We shall find, however, a perfect defence against depreciation thrown about the character even of the slave. For example:

1. *The allotment, however unequal, is represented as being from God.* This appears from the exhortation, "Do it heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto man;" "as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." The whole relation is lifted upon a higher plane; and its duties and trials are contemplated from the point of view from which God regards them. It matters little, upon this vast projection, whether one is appointed to be a king, or the subject beneath his sway; whether one is chosen to be the master, or the slave who moves nimbly at his beck. All are alike subjects before the Great King, each but a servant to do His will. There the obedience tends at last, and to Him the submission is due. In

every sphere, the high as well as the low, service is rendered, and the reward is measured to fidelity. The difference between master and servant is only one of degree. The most menial service is ennobled, when viewed only as an office in which the homage of perfect submission may be paid to the power that is supreme.

2. *Servitude loses every trace of abjectness, when it is taken up with an honest acceptance of the will;* "Not with eye-service as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God." This is the ennobling element, springing from the bosom of what we have stated above, which takes all baseness away from submission. We have seen already how it operates in the relations of the wife and the child. In the strength of conjugal and of filial affection, love finds its highest expression in the blending of two separate wills. The parties feel no dishonour in subjection, because it is their choice. The pain and the shame would be in the separation of what is united by their own preference. The result is the same in the relation of ser-

vitute, when its ideal conception is fully realized. Though not under the constraining influence of an instinctive affection, like the others, still the servant accepts his lot as appointed to him of God, and in the free exercise of his own will renders the obedience which is due. The compulsory feature, which makes it a hardship, is withdrawn. The service is consecrated by the operation of his own choice.

We do not think this an over-refinement of speculative thought. In many things our will freely accepts what that will would not originally have ordained. The heart, for example, recoils with terror from anticipated bereavement. Yet, when it falls upon us from the hand of God, it is sustained without a murmur. It becomes tolerable, as soon as the will submits to it as an accomplished fact. It is a marvellous provision for ameliorating the condition of servitude, that, under the influence of the grandest motives, it can thus be taken up into the domain of the will, and can be dignified by the consent with which it is accepted before God. The wheels revolve upon this

plane not only without jar, but almost without the friction of resistance.

3. Where true piety exists, a more ennobling influence is imparted in the fact, *that fidelity to man is transmuted into worship before God*. This higher consecration of the soul to God runs, like a scarlet thread, through the whole web of servile duty. Look at the schedule as laid down by the Apostle: "In singleness of heart, as unto Christ;" "for ye serve the Lord Christ;" "as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;" "doing service as to the Lord, and not to man;" "in singleness of heart, fearing God." The simple but sublime thought is turned over and over, in as many forms as may be combined in the kaleidoscope. It is the great truth which sanctifies all human life. Broken up as life is into myriads of little, insignificant acts, it is hard sometimes to redeem it from contempt. It becomes, however, a holy thing, when we realize that, with the heart unreservedly given to God, even the most trivial duty becomes an act of worship. Man's first relation to God

was through the law, and he worshipped through obedience. Grace sanctifies the principle anew; and with the acceptance of our persons in Christ Jesus, there is the gracious acceptance of every work that is wrought under the power of faith in Him. It is not received as cold obedience only; but, glowing with the warm affection by which it is inspired, it glides into the frame of devotion itself; which, as grateful incense, goes up to heaven from the altar of God within the heart. Our worship consists not only in formal acts of praise and prayer, when we bow before God in the sanctuary, or kneel at His feet in the closet; but in the work-shop, in the counting-room, in the office, every where; and in the hourly transactions of common business, the whole life becomes a sacred chant. The ten thousand little obediences are the sweet notes which compose it, rising above the din of this poor world, and mingling in the universal psalm of praise that is heard before the throne. Duty is felt in all its sacredness, and a soft radiance beams upon the path of the most obscure and patient of the Lord's saints upon the earth.

It is easy to see the influence of this high consideration, in preserving the self-respect of those who are called to serve. The spiritual instinct may catch it up, where there is not the mental culture to explain the Christian philosophy. It was embalmed in such a saying as this, that fell once from the lips of a female slave: "Sir, when I sweep my mistress' carpet, I try to do it to the glory of God." Ah! is it not for this, that we are distributed into different providential spheres; that, under every aspect of human character, in every condition of human life, grace may win its separate triumphs? Is it not that, in the blending of these varied experiences, this redeemed earth may render the full tribute of praise to Him who rules on high? The parts of the song may be different—the strophe and the anti-strophe—but all join in swelling the full chorus: "Amen; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever; Amen." (Revelation v. 12.)

It only remains to consider now—

IV. THE SPIRIT WITH WHICH THESE SERVILE DUTIES ARE TO BE PERFORMED.. These will be embraced in the three following particulars :

1. *Reverence for the authority of the master.*  
“Be obedient,” says Paul, “to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling.” Doubtless these last words have primary reference to a sense of responsibility before God ; for it is immediately added, “in singleness of your heart as unto Christ.” The fear is that of a tender conscience, rightly affected in view of its relations to the Divine law. But this, by necessary implication, includes the other. The master rules by an unquestioned Divine appointment. His authority is the shadow of that higher supremacy, of which it is constituted the earthly representative. There cannot be a proper homage to the latter which is not, partially at least, rendered through the former. We speak not of the slavish dread simply of the master’s power, which finds its place in those who are seeking to evade his control, and constantly fearing exposure to the penalty which they justly incur ; but of that



honest recognition of his authority as just and right, to which conscience is always directing a cordial and spontaneous obedience. In its wider application, through all the ramifications of society, the principle is that of reverence for law, which is the only sure foundation of government and order. It is inculcated here, where government begins; but the reason for it applies wherever government extends. In no age of the world does this principle need to be asserted more than in this age of restlessness and overturning. In no country upon the globe does it more need to be enforced than in our own, whose democratic institutions tend to beget a desire to level all distinctions, and to trample upon all authority. Law must always be honoured in the respect shown to those by whom it is administered. In every relation of the Family and of the State, reverence for authority will be evinced in the deference paid to those by whom it is wielded.

2. *Honesty of service is required*: "In singleness of heart;" "not with eye-service." Law is omnipresent, in the places which are



secret as well as those which are open. A good conscience will recognize its authority every where alike. Detection is not feared so much as disobedience, and the service is not grudgingly rendered to the penalty, but is cordially offered to the precept. Obedience is the free homage paid to duty, under the sanction of an approving conscience.

3. *All this implies a wholesome remembrance of the account to be given at the final judgment.* The solemn thought is addressed impartially to those who rule and to those who serve. It is held up before the master, in the admonition, "Knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven;" before the servant, in the consolation, "Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance." In the one it operates as a check upon power; in the other as a stimulus to duty. Both shall render an account of their trust. If there be injustice on either side, "he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons." It is a solid support for all the oppressed of earth,

when they can lean upon the judgment throne, and remand their case to its unerring arbitration.

What a revolution would be wrought in the history of this poor world if these correlative principles of mastership and service were faithfully applied in all the relations of human life !





## CHAPTER VIII.

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### COLLATERAL RELATIONS IN THE FAMILY.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### COLLATERAL RELATIONS IN THE FAMILY.

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“A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”—PROVERBS xvii. 17.



IN the preceding chapters we have gone through the *direct* relations of the Family, taking up the consecutive links of the chain as it reaches down from the highest to the lowest. The discussion would be incomplete, however, without considering those which are *collateral*: the secondary relations springing out of the primary, and widening out almost indefinitely. It is important in two respects. We shall trace that interlacing of relationships and cross-weaving of influences, by which the design of the Family is more fully accomplished, as a normal school for the training of both old and young.

And we shall see how families, by their overlapping, grow into larger communities, and diffuse these principles of order through universal society. As this chapter will conclude what we have to say upon the Family in its civil aspects, the reader may be pleased to gather up, in a brief resumé, the points which have been already elaborated.

We have seen law to be enthroned in the authority of the husband, the parent, the master; and this authority given, too, under the form of despotism. The supremacy is delegated in terms apparently absolute, to which submission the most prostrate, and obedience the most unquestioning, are imperiously exacted. The arrangement is not harsh, but beneficent. The correlation of society cannot be maintained without the subordination of men in their distinct and allotted spheres. The first lesson to be taught is the necessity of obedience. At the very place, therefore, where society is born, and the individual will begins to play, it is confronted by an authority which is massive and impregnable. If men

are to acquire mastery over themselves, they must be put at first under the pressure of a despotism. No milder form of authority will achieve the end in view.

Yet fallen man cannot be trusted with absolute power; and the checks against abuse are interposed by Infinite Wisdom, just where they can be most operative and the most safe. In the two primary relations, the conjugal and the parental, the authority is softened by an instinctive affection, the most powerful known to the human heart. In the relation of master, the power is held under the restraint of interest, the most universal and controlling of all the motives which influence human conduct. Again, throughout this domestic empire, power is lodged with a dual executive; in which are blended the oppositions of sex, with the mental and moral characteristics by which the two are distinguished. The mother is associated with the father in the rule over the child; the mistress is united with the master in the ascendancy over the servant. In the conjugal tie, the power is more absolutely a unit; but there it is

softened by a more perfect coalescence of the parties, by which they are melted into one. Still further: the sphere in which authority is exercised, is defined by the nature of the relation out of which it springs; and the limitations upon the power are expressly stated in the law by which it is conveyed. What is still more important, the parties invested with jurisdiction are placed at the bar of conscience, to render a judicial interpretation of their respective commissions; whilst the ruler and the ruled are continually sisted before the throne of God, and reminded of the account which must be given of their trusts, at the final judgment. It is difficult to see how better restraints could be devised; nor how they could be more wisely placed, and yet leave the authority in possession of sufficient force to bring the untutored will under subjection to law.

The Family is really the model state. It is not simply a device for the propagation and maintenance of the species; it is a strongly compacted government. In it, the nature of



law is punctually expounded by its actual enforcement. The lessons of obedience are learned in the absolute subordination of the parts to the whole. The great principles are unfolded upon which all human government rests, and society itself is created in the germ. By natural expansion, the Family grows into the tribe, and the principles of law are carried out under an administration that is strictly patriarchal. Tribes diverge, and are then consolidated into nations; and as society becomes more complex, its diversified interests are controlled by an authority which is more remote and kingly. But in the whole development, it is simply the law of the household expanding itself through all the ramifications of the commonwealth; and a true statemanship must glean its great and essential principles from the subordination first established in the Family. The nearer a government is conformed to this ideal, in the distribution of power and in the combination of influences by which society shall be controlled, the more perfect will it be, both in its conception and administration. The type

of all authority and of all obedience is to be found in the homes where we are born.

In these statements we have grasped only half of God's design in the constitution of the Family. Man needs to be *moulded* as well as to be *controlled*. The two are co-ordinate. In true obedience the will must be persuaded, and naked force can never be aught but oppression. The Family, therefore, would utterly fail of its end, if it were not a school of education, as well as an empire of law. Its superlative value is found in the combination of influence with authority, under which men are *trained* to the obedience which requires to be enforced. We enter, then, upon the development of this view, with special reference to the marvellous *interweaving of relationships* in the Family, and the corresponding *interaction of influence*, upon which its stupendous advantages as an educational institute mainly depend. The topic is broadly suggestive, but we must be content with looking at its most obtrusive features.

1. *Within a small compass is embraced the*

*largest variety of character, with the fullest action between them all.* The extremes of age are brought together. Two generations must of necessity co-exist. In many instances there will be three; when the grandsire gathers around his knee the children's children, and garrulous old age tells to prattling infancy the tales of olden time. There is the father, in the maturity of his strength; the mother, in the fullness of womanly dignity and pride; while the entire space, from teething childhood to the grace and beauty of early manhood, is dotted with the offspring who stand at every degree in the scale of development. Age, with its ripened experience, blends with questioning childhood. Parental strength lends its support to tottering infancy. Learning brings its stores to enlighten the expanding intellect, and wisdom yields its counsels to direct the path of inexperience.

This is no unreal picture. Thousands of happy homes present the original, of which this must be reckoned but as the rudest sketch. Now, let the moralist form the estimate of all this interacting influence. Are the scales of

the most refined speculation sufficiently delicate to weigh the exact measure and proportion of each? Who can determine the power which lies in a smile, or in a frown, as the child looks up into the face of the parent, radiant with approval in the one, or darkened with displeasure in the other? How many critical moments are there in the perilous middle passage from youth to manhood, when a boy's destiny, for this world and the next, trembles upon the edge of a single word? How often has the rebellion of a wayward heart given way under the serene piety of sweet old age, when it has broken its staff at the brink of the river, and waits for the shining ones to lead it over the flood? How many a wrinkle has been smoothed on the brow of care by the tiny hands of a babe, so innocent yet of the trouble it must come in its turn to know? Has not the rattling glee around the fireside often chased the gloom of despondency and loss, and roused the flagging energies to ward off the cloud which threatens to burst upon the happy group? When the grave throws its dark shadow upon the soul, has not

bereavement lost its sting, under the soft caress which kisses the tear from the cheek? Home! Home! that only trace of the original paradise which God's mercy has spared, in a world of sin! Who does not exclaim with the gentle Cowper:

“ Domestic happiness! thou only bliss  
Of Paradise that hast survived the fall!  
Thou art the nurse of virtue : in thine arms  
She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,  
Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again.”

But could this be, if old and young were not grouped together, with this inter-play of feeling between them both? Ah! cut the band which winds around the house, and scatter these ages apart; unweave all this web of association, and blot out the moral education of the fireside and the daily meal, and how soon would society sink into chaos and utter night! We have a glimpse of this danger in the demoralization which takes place, in the unnatural separation of these parties in the pursuit of enjoyment: men herding together in the club-room, from

which all the sanctifying influence of woman's presence is excluded ; women abandoning themselves to unlicensed gossip in their equally exclusive associations ; the young in the wild revelry of the ball-room, in whose glare and folly the old can take no share. Against all this, the home is a constant protest and protection. Its sweetest moral lesson is found in the simple grouping of all classes together, in joint participation of the pleasures which are rational and gentle. For this the Family enjoys a special advantage from its compactness. Brought close together within its narrow circle, the influence which each exerts is not weakened by diffusion, whilst the constancy of the association allows no suspension of its power. It is quiet and steady, and bathes us like the light or the air ; insinuating into the very pores of our nature, and incorporating with the whole of our inner being and life. The calm majesty of authority presides, too, over all, holding each in its place, and checking the first discord which threatens to disturb the harmony.

2. Though not logically distinct, yet, from its acknowledged importance, *we denote next the influence arising from the union of the sexes.* The Family is constituted by such union in marriage, and the vast influence of home springs chiefly from the combination of male and female in all of its relations. The husband is moulded by the wife, and that in exact proportion to the worthiness of character he shall attain. The wife, with still greater flexibility, is developed into perfect womanhood by assimilation to the husband. It is needless to expand the thought. The distinction of sex runs completely through the being of both, distinguished from each other in their intellectual and moral structure, for the very purpose of being united as counterparts. The same modification of character takes place in every sphere and upon every plane, where this union is effected. In the Family the influence of this combination is the most pervading, because the combination itself is there the most intimate. Female softness is added to manly firmness, in tempering parental authority; whilst the blending ele-



ments are most conspicuously felt in the general influence by which the character of the young is shaped.

We had occasion to speak incidentally of the modification of love under the influence of sex, when treating of that subsisting between husband and wife ; also of that felt by the father to the daughter, of the mother to the son ; promising to give greater prominence to the thought when it should recur at this point. Nothing is more singular. Love, in its principle, must be the same in all. There is the same ground in nature, where the relations are the same. The son is not more a child to the mother, the daughter is not more a child to the father, and yet a peculiar affinity causes these lines of love to cross over to those of the opposite sex. Perhaps it is beyond explanation, as being an elementary principle of our nature. All society is composed of but the two ; who, because destined for each other, are drawn together by a reciprocal attraction. Call it instinct, or sentiment, or by any name we please, there it is. We cannot go behind



the consciousness of the fact itself, and all human intercourse is of necessity modified by it. It pervades all the relations; for, the distinction of sex is found in every one. Starting from the husband and wife, it reappears in the father and the mother, in the daughter and the son, in the brother and the sister, in the master and in the mistress, in the man servant and the maid servant, in the uncle and the aunt, down and through all the degrees of cousinship, until relationship thins out and disappears. After that, in the wider circles of general society, the distinction recurs upon us in the modification of all our friendships, colouring the feelings and shaping the external intercourse. We never escape from its presence and power. The man and the woman are sent forth two and two all through life; and whenever they touch each other, it is with this modification of sentiment which springs from the nature of both. Distinct types of civilization take their form and colour from its influence. It penetrates even the domain of impartial law, and compels

a measure of discrimination in the administration of justice itself.

In the domestic economy, we are at the fountain of this all-pervading influence. In the lowest of its relations, the asperity of obedience is soothed to the servant who bends under the gentle sway of the mistress, mitigating the authority which would, perhaps, be hard if wielded only by the master. If we ascend to the relation that is highest, who can describe the power of a mother's constant love in developing the graces of the child, and in mellowing the character as it ripens to maturity? The father's judgment and will are not a whit more important than the mother's genial sympathy and love. If the one be the strong soil in which the child's character finds its root, the other is the light and air which the plant must see and breathe, and both combined are the indispensable conditions of its growth. Perhaps, however, in the collateral relation of brother and sister we shall find the best illustration of the influence of sex, because it is there unmixed with any thing else. With the

parent and the master there is an overshadowing authority, modified, it is true, in its application, according as it is exercised by the one sex or by the other, but distinctly felt in both. We may not be able always to separate the influence from the authority, so as accurately to measure it. But brother and sister stand upon an equal footing. Neither possesses any factitious advantage. Whatever ascendancy either may gain, is acquired by the influence which is exerted; and the whole effect which sex produces in determining this influence comes distinctly forth. And how perfectly reciprocal is that influence between the two, in the strength which is imparted to the one, and in the refinement which is breathed into the other! Universal observation teaches that the best constituted families are those in which the one sex is balanced against the other throughout. So much is this the case, that, when both are thrown out into general society, it is not difficult to discriminate the man who has been educated with a sister at his side, and the woman who has been unconsciously moulded

through a brother's contact. It rarely turns out that a son, dutiful to his mother, or a brother, affectionate to his sister, ever grows up into a bad man or an unworthy citizen.

3. *The gradation of rank in the Family* should not be overlooked, in estimating its value as a school for training. No folly is more conspicuous than the agrarianism which seeks to level the distinctions in society, and to reduce all classes to a uniform grade. One might as well undertake to top the trees of the forest to one standard of height, or decree them by measurement to one uniform girth. The different varieties which grow together upon the same soil, have their various proportions determined from the beginning, which no artificial culture, or forced process of any sort, can hope to change. This great rule of unity in diversity is not more apparent in the forest than it is in mankind; the unity of the whole in the diversity of the constituent parts. Men are born with different degrees of intellect, with different tastes, with different advantages for improvement. They are placed in different circum-

stances, giving a particular bent to the character of each. There is every variety of disposition and temperament, going still further to modify the work which each shall accomplish. So that, if there should be a periodical redistribution of wealth, placing all upon a momentary equality, the lapse of a single generation would more than suffice to disarrange it again, and reproduce the hated distinctions in their full separating force. It is well, therefore, that in the Family they should meet us at the threshold of life. From earliest recollection, we have never known any thing else but gradation in rank, and the subordination which it implies. Here are the parents at the apex of the cone ; a group of children, under the law of dependence, form its sides as it widens downward ; while at its broad base are the servants, in pronounced subjection to the authority above them. The monotony of equality is completely broken ; whilst a wholesome interchange of offices binds them all together in a unity that is the more beautiful, from the complexity of relations out of which it springs. On the one

part, there is constant tendance and care, with an overflowing love which transforms the very anxiety into a delight. On the other part, there is the homage of obedience to authority, and of reverence to station and to age. The interaction of influences between the two is without intermission from their proximity, and is so reciprocal that we cannot determine which receives the greater benefit. The hardness of character, which is apt to be produced by habitual command, is softened by the gentleness which love infuses into authority. The habits of reverence which grow out of dependence, fashion the subordinates in a mould which is scarcely less beautiful. And the amenities which are shown to those inferior in station, soften the asperity of subjection and of service. In their combined influence, they prepare old and young for the duties and intercourse of the wider society which they find in the world without.

4. We notice, lastly, *the overlapping of Families, and the interweaving of the remoter relationships which are formed.* An entirely

isolated Family is scarcely anywhere to be found. They are rather grouped into clusters, held together by ties of affection and of blood. Almost as soon as a child knows its father and its mother, it recognizes the brothers and sisters of each as the founders of so many separate homes just like his own. He crosses over the boundary by which all these are divided, in the reverence and love felt to the uncle and the aunt, and in the more familiar tenderness felt to the cousin. In the one case it is an extension, properly qualified, of the sentiment cherished towards the parent; and in the other, a weaker repetition of the love entertained for the brother and sister. Presently, these families branch out in their turn, and give the new relations of nephews and nieces. As the circles widen, the number of one's kindred is enlarging, whilst the relationship is less intimate and the affection less strong, until at length they disappear upon the great sea of human society. But it is in the bosom of these collateral relations, with all their pleasant associations and influences, that we are educated. The inter-



change of kindly offices, and all the soft friendships of which they are the source, blend with a thousand cross-lights upon our life, insensibly moulding the character. As we find ourselves always in this nest of relationships, the heart spins out from itself a thousand delicate threads which unite us to the world without. As we are at first fashioned in the Family, so, when fully trained, we slide forth upon these more diffused relations, and become at length a portion of the great commonwealth to which we belong. Families branch into clans; clans, into tribes; tribes, into nations. But when the close connection ceases to be traced, and the peculiar affection, which springs from kinship, is lost, the great principles, by which society is constituted, have been firmly established, and we are prepared to accept and to discharge our respective trusts.

Such is the Family, as designed by God to be the type of all society, and the model of all government. Let the statesman and the patriot, the casuist and the Christian, hold it in the estimation which it deserves, and which was fixed upon it by Him by whom it was ordained.



Part Second.

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THE FAMILY

IN ITS

CHURCHLY ASPECTS.





## CHAPTER I.

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# THE FAMILY, THE GERM OF THE CHURCH. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT.





## CHAPTER I.

### *THE FAMILY THE GERM OF THE CHURCH. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT.*

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*"The Church that is in their house."*



IN the first part of this essay, an attempt has been made to analyze the several relations of which the Family is composed, and to trace throughout the delegated authority, by which it is constituted the model of the State. It has been shown, in the subordination of its various parts, how the essential principles of government and law are illustrated, and how these are carried over, in the gradual expansion of the Family, into all the ramifications of the most diffused society.

Profoundly attractive as these views may be to the statesman and the citizen, there is an-

other aspect of the subject which more deeply stirs the heart of the Christian ; and no discussion of this grand and original institute would be complete which did not signalize its uses in the sphere of religion. This topic, though kindred with the other, is yet independent of it ; and we have preferred to make the consideration of it the burden of a separate series of chapters.

The social principle in man leads to the formation of innumerable guilds for mutual protection or advantage. And as civilization advances, the interests of society become more complex, and their reciprocal competition calls for constant and minute readjustment. Associations, therefore, spring up, almost without number, limited in their design, and partial in their results. There are, however, two corporations, and only two, which exist by Divine appointment. They are provided expressly to meet this craving of our nature, and with their destruction society itself would be dissolved. These fundamental and permanent institutions are the State and the Church, the archetypes of all the possible combinations into which so-

ciety may cast itself. If, then, the Family be the primary germ from which all society is developed, the original spring from which the flowing stream is derived, we will antecedently expect it to expand, in this two-fold direction. By an *a priori* deduction, it follows that the Family will be the Church in embryo, as we have already seen to be true in regard to the the State. This chapter will be devoted to THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THIS IMPORTANT FACT.

1. At the very beginning, *under a system of natural religion, Adam was constituted the head and organ of a religious Commonwealth.* God entered into a covenant with him, distinctly religious in its character, and which proposed for its end his promotion to the highest spiritual felicity. The tree of knowledge, as the test of man's obedience, was the appointed symbol of God's moral government; whilst the mysterious tree of life was the seal of all the blessings which should accrue from a successful probation. In the institution of the Sabbath a more distinct claim was laid upon the homage and worship of the creature, in which his

whole life and being were surrendered to the Creator, in the tribute which was thus exacted of him. In the language of Lord Bacon, "Man was thus designated as the interpreter and high priest of nature, to gather up its mute praises, to fill them with his own intellect and soul, and to pour the universal song into the ear of Him, whose glory was reflected in them all."

But what is peculiarly pertinent to the argument in hand, these high transactions of the Deity never contemplated the first man as an isolated individual, but as the representative and the parent of a race which was putatively and potentially within his loins. By just so much as he was under a probation of law, a subject of moral government, by so much was this the trial of all his posterity, who were involved in the consequences of his transgression. And by just so much as he was the minister of worship, by so much was this the typical and germinant worship to be rendered by his seed, in all the generations in which successively they should be born. It was the joint worship



of himself, and of her who was the partner of his being, offered officially by him for her, in the conjugal union from which the Family should spring: an organic worship, in which were represented the countless tribes into which that Family should spread, to the end of time. By the force of his position, as the root and representative of all his offspring, he was constituted the prophet, priest, and king of that religious empire. Had he continued steadfast in obedience, until confirmed in holiness at the end of his probation, it had been his high office, as prophet, to teach the doctrines of natural religion to his descendants; as priest, to order the ritual of worship in which they, with him, should engage; as king, to wield a vice-regal sceptre over millions, who would recognize in his authority the supremacy of the great Lord over all, God blessed for ever. From its origin, the Family, in its idea as it stood before the mind of Jehovah, was THE CHURCH, the temple of His worship.

2. *Equally so after the fall, the first man becomes, in the Family, the minister of the re-*

*ligion of grace.* Brief as the history is, it is full of broad suggestions as to the churchly character of the household. Look at the first promise, the seedling in which is implicitly contained the whole of our theology. In its very terms, "the seed of the woman," it postulates the parent and the Family; and that Family, as embracing the ark, with its mercy-seat and the covering rainbow. Definitely as it points through the ages to Him who should be born of the Virgin, it could be fulfilled, both as a promise and a prophecy, only through the Family, bound together by natural ties, until the fulness of the times.

Then what mean "the coats of skins," in which the naked pair were clothed, but the institution of piacular sacrifice, teaching the doctrine of redemption through the shedding of blood? See how the hints thicken, when, in the next generation, Abel offers "the firstlings of his flock;" whilst the great apostasy from the faith begins in Cain, who reverts to the rites and worship of natural religion, to which a sinner is henceforth incompetent. During

the interval which stretched between the first father and his sons, was there no practice of a mediatorial worship in the first Family as the Church of God? If not, why does the sacrificial offering appear with Abel, with his brother Cain as the first dissenter from the doctrine and religion of grace? The severe compression of these early records shuts out, indeed, the details of the first family-life. But the inference is inevitable, from the institution of sacrifices instantly after the fall, and the mention of animal sacrifice at the very next stage in the history, that the space between the two must have been covered by this form of worship. The swiftness of the passage from the one event to the other only places them the closer, side by side; whilst the divine reprobation of Cain's offering establishes it as a deviation from the appointed and recognized mode of approaching God in religious homage.

Earlier even than this, there is the self-brandishing sword guarding the sacramental tree of life, and warning man of his forfeiture of all the blessings of the first covenant; and as

an off-set to this, the stationing of the cherubim at the east of the garden, the symbol of God's presence, before whose face man, though a sinner, is allowed still to worship. What shall be made of all this, but as cumulative evidence of the sinner's approach to God, under the religion of grace? This being admitted, the churchly character of the Family is conclusively proved. It was the only association which then existed, in which alone the collective worship could be rendered that has always been exacted of the creature.

3. *Under the patriarchal economy which ensued, the traces of religious service are found still in the bosom of the Family.* Civil magistracy was first instituted in the death-penalty commanded to Noah. No earlier hint is anywhere given. Not until we strike the pregnant injunction, "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," do we find the germ from which civil government is developed. The long interval, therefore, of two thousand years, from the creation to the deluge, has been well termed the dispensational period of the

Family; since this was the only form under which government is known to have been administered.

But was not piety preserved in the line of Seth, under the denomination of "the sons of God," as distinguished from the ungodly descendants of Cain, who were designated as "the daughters of men"? And through what channel was true religion kept alive and transmitted, until that sad commingling of the two lines brought on the enormous wickedness which terminated in the judgment of the flood? Was not the first act of Noah, in coming forth from the ark, the resumption of the patriarchal prerogative in offering burnt sacrifices for himself and for his household? And did not Job, at a later period in the same dispensation, assume the same function of priesthood in his house, when he "offered burnt offerings according to the number of all his sons;" saying, "It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts?" When it is added: "Thus did Job continually," what inference can be drawn, but that this was the customary

office of the patriarch under that economy? The patriarchal blessing, too, was priestly and official in its nature. And the birth right which the profane Esau rejected, and which the supple Jacob acquired, was the investiture of the first-born with all the patriarchal privileges, magisterial and priestly, which death conveyed from father to son.

It must not be omitted, further, that when the Church came to be more distinctly constituted, with enlarged promises and with new seals, in the days of Abraham, it was still founded in the house of the patriarch. A covenant was made with him, which included a two-fold blessing. "I will make of thee a great nation," said Jehovah to him; "and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." It is a double promise, of temporal enlargement and of spiritual preferment. In the former, we find the Hebrew nation in its germ; in the latter, the Christian Church. By virtue of the first, he becomes the father of all the tribes of Israel; by virtue of the last, he becomes the father of the faithful, through all generations.

“And the Scripture,” says Paul, “foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed; so, then, they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”\* The seal of this ecclesiastical covenant was put into the flesh according to the law of natural descent, the servants being admitted to the same privilege, by virtue of their incorporation as the members of the household: “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised.”† Thus visibly was the Church set up in the family of Abraham for a time, even more conspicuous than the Hebrew State which should issue from his loins.

4. *Under the institutions of Moses, when the structure of the Church was so greatly enlarged, the tie is not severed which connects it with the Family.* The most solemn of its feasts, which

\* Gal. iii. 8, 9.

† Rom. iv. 11.



looked backward as the memorial of the deliverance from Egypt, and forward as the type of the greater deliverance from the bondage of sin—the great passover, which renews itself in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and is one of the bonds of connection between the two Testaments—this feast was observed strictly within the household. By special statute, the children of each family were to be instructed in the significance of the whole service.

Again, the families of Israel went up, as such, three times a year to worship in Jerusalem. And what is more suggestive than all, the priesthood was originally constituted of the first-born of every family; for whom the tribe of Levi was afterwards substituted, a commutation tax being still required as their redemption from an obligation which needed at least to be legally recognized.

It remained, too, an organic law throughout this entire dispensation, that membership in the Church was founded upon the right of birth, just as citizenship in the State. In both, by the operation of a fixed principle, itself grounded in



nature, the State and the Church are carried back to the source from which they spring ; and the Family is continually presented as the organic institute from which both derive their privileges, together with their being.

5. *Under the New Testament economy, where the Church assumes her final form, the Family is again her home.* See the Apostolic references to Priscilla and Aquila, and “the Church that is in their house ;”\* to “Nymphas, and the Church which is in his house ;”† to “the house of Chloe,” “the household of Stephanas,” and “of Onesiphorus,” and the like ; all giving evidence that the earliest Christian organizations were formed within the enclosure of the the Family, as long before in that of Abraham.

We have already referred to the ancient promise made to the father of the faithful, in which the Family lies couched as the germ of the Church : “In thee shall all the *families* of the earth be blessed.” Observe how this is recognized by Peter in the first proclamation of the gospel, after the day of Pentecost, when

\* Rom. xvi. 5. † Col. iv. 15.

he says to the Jews, "the promise is unto you, and to *your children*, and to all that are afar off." The line of the Church is through the household ; and the fundamental law is assumed in its application to the Gentiles, that the ecclesiastical position of the child shall be determined by that of the parent. It is upon this identical principle the Apostle settles the controversy which arose upon the continuance of the marriage relation between believers and unbelievers, when he says, "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband ; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy."\* The faith of either party determines the status of the offspring, as being within the covenant of God, and thus constitutionally entitled to the privileges of His Church upon earth. The household baptisms in the New Testament proceed upon the same fundamental idea, recognizing the law of birth fixing the fact of Church relationship, as still unrepealed.

It is difficult to see how this cumulative evi-

\* 1 Cor. vii. 14.

dence could be stronger than it is—all the more valuable because so incidental—that God designed the Family to be the radix of the Church. It holds through all the dispensations, and will continue to the end of time. The case is far stronger as to the Church than as to the State. As to the latter, the Family may be considered as its source; but as to the former, the Family is its fundamental idea. The Family may *become* the State, but it *is* the Church. Alas, how often corrupt and apostate!

It is not aside from the expository character of this essay, to indicate the bearing of these facts upon the doctrine of infant baptism. Two principles emerge into view from the general survey, which really determine the matter. The first is, that in the Family are to be found both the State and the Church in embryo, perpetuated as they both are, through its continuance, until the end of time. The second is, that in both alike, the civil and ecclesiastical status of the child is defined from that of the parent, by right of birth. It is understood, of course, that we treat here of the Church as an or-

ganized society, administered under the constitution and ordinances which God has provided for its government and growth in the world. Of the *invisible* Church, with its constituency of the truly regenerate, known only to Him from whom the election to eternal life proceeds, it does not concern us in this connexion to speak. In this *visible* Church, having a corporate existence amongst men, as in the State, citizenship is not acquired, but is inherited, by all who are born within its pale. Such as are not thus born, pass, in either case, to the enjoyment of this privilege by a process of naturalization. The parallel is most exact between the two jurisdictions, so far as we have yet traced it. Does it stop at this point, or can it be pushed into details, as the same ground principle works itself out? Let us see.

The State, whilst it recognizes the citizenship of its infant members, withholds the full enjoyment of its privileges until they shall be rendered competent, by suitable training, to assume and discharge the corresponding obligations. It protects them through the whole

period of their minority. It exercises a general supervision over parental control itself, that its unlimited power may not be abused. It provides a measure of education, which, however inadequate, is still the confession of its responsibility in the premises. It becomes the guardian of the orphan, assumes in trust the patrimonial estate, and secures its descent; and then, at the period of majority, removes every restriction, and invests with all the dignities and immunities of full citizenship. In like manner, the Church distinguishes between her members in full communion and those who are still minors, holding herself responsible for the spiritual oversight and training of the latter, until they are prepared to take the vows of God upon themselves. She differs from the State only in one particular, as to this matter; that in the civil jurisdiction a given age is fixed upon as the period of majority, whilst in the ecclesiastical a well-defined spiritual condition is required, before admission to all the ordinances of the sanctuary. In the State, a person is a minor until he reaches the age of one and twenty

years ; it being presumed that he is then competent to all the duties of a citizen. In the Church, the ecclesiastical minority terminates only when the man is born again of the Spirit of God ; it being known that a new and divine life is indispensable to fulfil the obligations of the Christian.

Now, "the token of the covenant," which God established ages ago "with Abraham, and with his seed after him in their generations," was that circumcision which Paul describes as "the seal of the righteousness of faith." By express command this "covenant" must "be in the flesh of such as are born in the house," and of such as are "bought with money of any stranger." In the Family Church, the seal by which spiritual blessings were ratified must be applied alike to those whose title rested upon the claim of birth, and as the evidence of naturalization to those who became members of the household by adoption. Nothing, then, remains but to establish the identity of circumcision and baptism, as seals of the same covenant under the two dispensations ; and the

conclusion is irresistible, that infant members, whose birth invests with covenant privileges, are entitled to the seal by which those privileges are attested and confirmed. Our purpose is fulfilled in simply indicating the line of argument, without pausing to develope it. Of course, the plausible objection, that no special statute in the New Testament enjoins the baptism of infants, falls to the ground. It presupposes that the principle of infant membership in the Church of God is now, for the first time, introduced; in which case an express law would indeed be required. But, as we have seen, this has been the organic law of the Church throughout her entire history. It would, therefore, most naturally be assumed as a principle thoroughly understood, and it would require a formal repeal before its operation could be estopped. This repeal, too, would involve such a reconstruction of the whole economy of the Church, that it could not be indirectly and silently accomplished. Instead, therefore, of yielding to the demand for an express law instituting the right, we must rather



insist upon being shown the legislative act by which the right has been withdrawn. The New Testament is clear in testifying to baptism as the substitute for circumcision ; its silence beyond this only leaves the application of it to be determined by the organic law which remains in force.







## CHAPTER II.

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# THE CHURCH UNDER NATURAL RELIGION.





## CHAPTER II.

### THE CHURCH UNDER NATURAL RELIGION.

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*"Which show the work of the law written in their hearts."*  
ROMANS ii. 15.



IN discussing further the churchly aspect of the Family, it will be proper to consider *its adaptedness to promote the interests of religion under the systems both of NATURE and of GRACE.* The first of these will be sufficient for this chapter.

It will be well, however, to define just here the term used, especially as the current conception of natural religion does not appear to be critically exact. It is usually opposed to revealed religion ; and the distinction between the two is sought in the modes, respectively, by which the knowledge of Divine things is obtained. Natural religion is represented as resting upon

that knowledge of God which is acquired from the interpretation of the works of nature, or by the operations of pure reason, independent of any direct communication from God Himself. Revealed religion is construed to be that system of truth which is known to man, only through an authenticated and explicit revelation from heaven. The difficulty, however, with this discrimination is, that it has never been submitted to experiment, how far the knowledge of God may be acquired through the deductions simply of natural reason. It pleased God to reveal Himself, at the very beginning, to the first man; and as a revelation more or less complete belongs to both systems, it cannot be made the feature by which they are distinguished one from the other. The distinction, therefore, must lie far deeper in the nature of the systems themselves. It will be more accurate to define natural religion as the religion of man in his original condition, as a holy being, created in the image of God; whilst revealed religion is simply the religion of grace, suited to man's condition as a sinner. The antithesis

is, then, perfect and intelligible: natural religion is the religion of law; revealed religion is that of grace. The distinction does not lie in the mode, nor in the degree, of the knowledge enjoyed, but in the opposing states of holiness and sin in which the creature is found, and in the different methods of the worshipper's approach to God. The religion of nature is the privilege only of beings who are holy; the religion of grace is the refuge of such as are fallen and sinful.

We are pleased to find this view supported by so vigorous and acute a thinker as Dr. Thornwell, who, after presenting the distinction which we have criticised above, remarks, "This distinction is real, but it is useless. There are truths which reason is competent to discover, as there are other truths which can only be known by a special communication from God. But the religion of man has never been conditioned exclusively by natural truth. In his unfallen condition, he was placed under a dispensation which involved a supernatural revelation. He has never been left to the sole

guidance of his reason; and therefore a mere natural theology, in the sense indicated, has never been the sufficient explanation of his state."

The same writer proceeds to define natural religion, as "that which springs from the relations, whether essential or instituted, which subsist between God and the rational creature. It was the theology of Adam before the fall, the theology of the covenant of works; and, though remnants of it still linger in the human mind, the perfect knowledge of it can only be obtained from the Christian Scriptures. Supernatural theology is the science of salvation; the doctrines of man's religion considered as a sinner, and as redeemed by the mediation of Christ. The true contrast, therefore, is not that of natural and revealed, but that of natural and supernatural; the natural indicating the religion of man in one aspect—the supernatural his religion in another. Both are equally revealed."\*

\* Thornwell's "Collected Writings," Vol. I, pp. 31, 32, etc., 268.

The reader will perceive, not only the *contrast*, but also the *relation*, between the two. The one precedes the other, and lays the foundation upon which it rests. The entire scheme of grace, as unfolded in the gospel of both Testaments, hinges upon the character and government of God, as exhibited under a previous dispensation of law. The problem to be solved in the salvation of a sinner, is to show how "God can be just, and yet justify the ungodly." The terms in which this is expressed reveal it as a problem of law, to maintain its absolute rectitude and authority in the very manifestation of saving love. The two forms of religion, therefore, though distinct, are yet bound together by an indissoluble connexion; and it is entirely fitting that the Family should be contemplated, in its religious uses, under both. The question is now submitted, *how far the Family is adapted to subserve the ends of Natural religion?* Just to that extent it fulfills a function of the Church.

1. *The supremacy of law* was put before man to be distinctly recognized, under the first

dispensation in the garden of Eden. By this law, as originally graven upon his nature, the character and claims of Jehovah were in the first instance revealed; and a special covenant was made with him, which formed a Divine commentary upon that text. This stipulated for a perfect obedience, as the duty of the creature; and promised, as its reward, confirmation in holiness, and future exemption from trial. Its language was, DO and LIVE; punctual observance of the law, both as to its letter and spirit, should issue in the eternal and unassailed enjoyment of the Divine favour. It will be seen, however, that this was a dispensation, not of mere government, but of religion as well. The obedience required was not simply outward conformity with an external command, but it was the expression of inward homage to the Infinite Being by whom it was enjoined. It involved all the attributes of worship; an abiding trust in the promise addressed to man's faith, and the concentration of the affections upon One seen to be "glorious in holiness." The posture of the soul was that of adoration



and love; and the obedience of the subject became of necessity the homage of the worshipper.

If this view be correct, it is transparently clear how the fundamental idea of natural religion is carried out in the provisions of the Family. The scarlet thread of *authority* is woven into the whole constitution of the latter, asserting at every point the essence and soul of natural religion. It vests in the husband, the parent, the master; and requires obedience of the wife, the child, and the servant. It searches down through all the constituent relations, from the highest to the lowest, and becomes the guardian of religion, in being the asserter of law. Especially under a dispensation, where worship takes the form of obedience, and where the promise of eternal life hinges upon it, must the Family be the calyx in the bosom of which this religion of nature shall find its nourishment and support.

2. This general inference will be strengthened by reverting to the *absoluteness of this authority*, which we had occasion to denote in

our previous speculations, as characterizing Family rule. Though not wholly irresponsible, which could not be the case in authority that is delegated, yet we found it *absolute* towards those who are under its sway. The parties invested with jurisdiction sit as judges upon their own commission, and determine, without appeal, the extent of their own authority. We begin to have a deeper insight into this arrangement, when it is remembered that this very absolutism only the more closely approximates domestic rule to the government of God. It is the feature of the Divine supremacy needing to be typified in human relations, which could only be done under the form of a despotism. The husband and the father must represent within the household the awful majesty and power of God; and, looked upon, from either of its sides, it gives a wonderful support to a religious dispensation that is founded upon law. On the one hand, the ruler is awed into a discreet use of his power by the representative character of his acknowledged prerogative, and is taught to worship God in the very com-

mands which he himself issues. On the other hand, the subject finds the yoke of obedience lightened, when it is felt to be mediately rendered to an authority which is Divine. In the one and in the other, the sentiment of religion is strengthened in the soul.

3. *The diversity of authority*, also, in the Family, is worthy of remark in the same connexion. It assumes a distinct form in the conjugal, in the parental, in the magisterial relations, whilst in each the submission enjoined is unique in its character. It is not necessary to repeat the illustrations of this point given in the preceding portion of this essay. The application of the fact is all that is required now. Considered, then, as representing the divine supremacy, of which it is the earthly shadow, how admirably it pictures to the mind the unity of God's law, and the perfect flexibility with which it bends to all the varieties of human condition! Nay, what an emblem is it of that universal government, which comprehends within its grasp all ranks of intelligent beings, whether in heaven above or upon the earth beneath!

There is seen to be but one law, even as there is but one God ; a law which, in its essential unity, can be endlessly modified in its application to all the details in the existence of every order and class within its broad empire. If this be the law upon which the religion of nature is founded, then the Family constitution, which so profusely illustrates the one, must equally foster the other. In every form in which the obedience is rendered, there is a corresponding modulation in the worship which is expressed. The different domestic relations, varying in their intensity of submission, are the separate strings of one harp ; whose different notes blend in a common harmony, which is at once the obedience of worship, and the worship of obedience.

4. One more suggestion will close the parallel we have been attempting to draw. It is not bare authority alone that presides over the empire of the house, but *authority that is instinct with love*. Neither the husband nor the father is simply a ruler. In these higher relations, he is immeasurably more ; and even in the lowest re-

lation, the rule of the master is softened by a sentiment of sympathy and kindness. In them all, dominion assumes the form of a watchful providence, commanding only that it may more effectually protect and bless. Conversely, too, the obedience of the ruled is the homage paid, not so much to authority, which is the outward body, as to love, which is its indwelling and actuating soul. Is there not in all this a shadowing forth of the relations which a holy creature sustains to Jehovah? In the religion of nature, is it law alone which is paramount? Or is it law springing out of the depths of infinite goodness, and presenting the Divine Ruler as also the Father and Portion of His obedient children? And what transforms this obedience of theirs into worship, and a dispensation of authority into a system of religion, but the reciprocal love which can see in duty nothing but delight, and in service nothing but a privilege? This is, perhaps, the crowning illustration of the support which the Family lends to natural religion. In the wonderful analogies between the two we may rest the argument, that God

“set the one over against the other.” Had man never fallen, the teachings of natural religion might possibly have been conveyed from age to age in the Family, as the only Church which the race required.



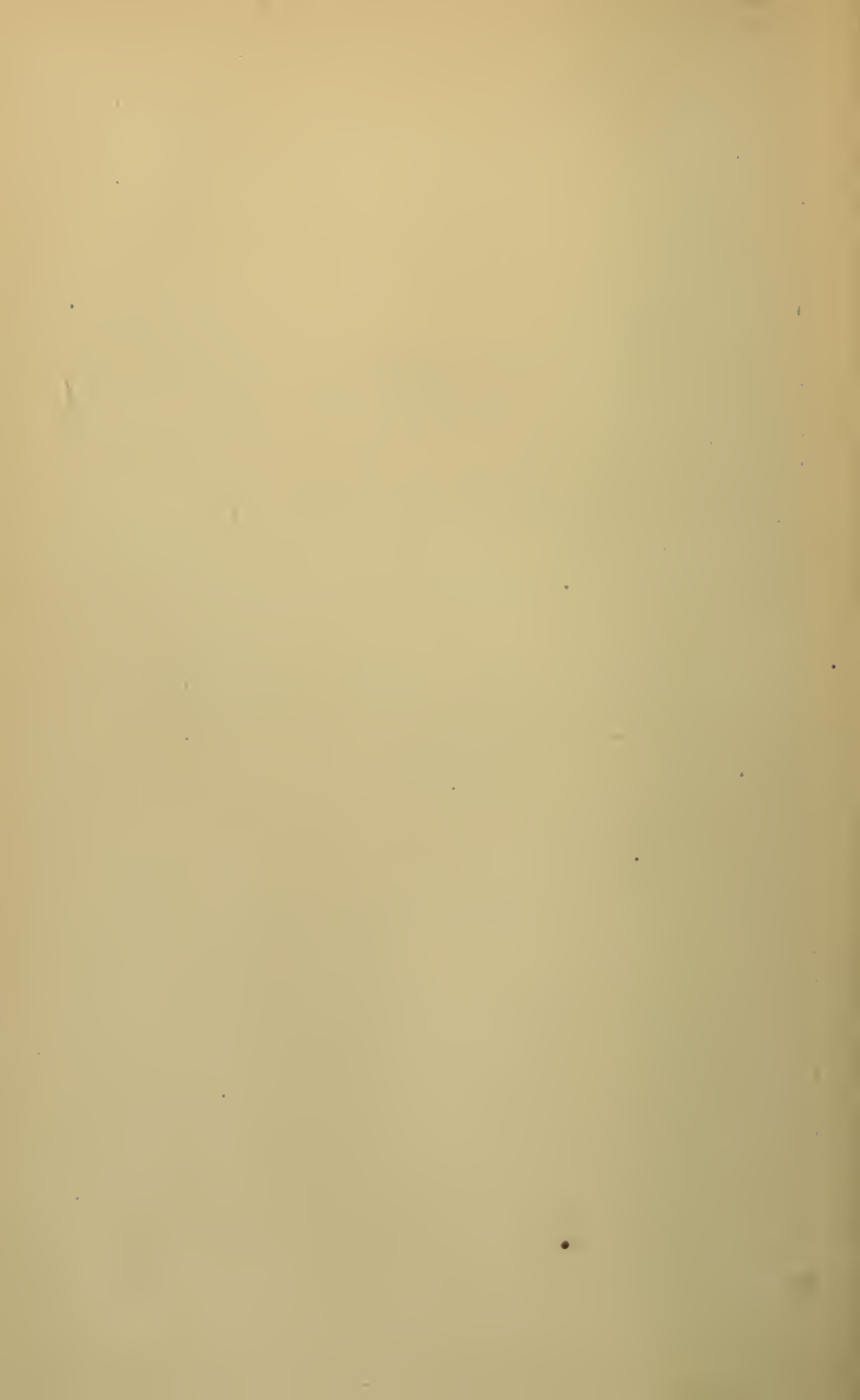


### CHAPTER III.



## THE CHURCH UNDER THE SYSTEM OF GRACE.





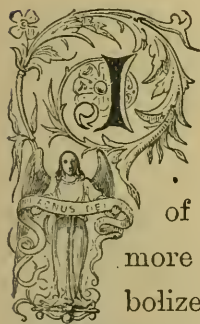


## CHAPTER III.

### THE CHURCH UNDER THE SYSTEM OF GRACE.

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*"Thou shalt call Me, my Father, and shalt not turn away from Me."*—JEREMIAH iii. 19.



IN the preceding chapter, the Family has been presented in its fitness to illustrate and to support the essential principles of *natural religion*. It is even more conspicuously designed to symbolize the doctrines of *grace*. The consideration of this will, therefore, be more articulate and full, as it will not fail to bring a greater refreshment to the heart of the reader.

1. It is needless to suggest that ADOPTION is one of the most comprehensive terms of the evangelical system. It wraps within itself the whole of a sinner's salvation, just as an organized plant is implicitly contained in the seed

from which it is developed. It includes the pardon of sin and the acceptance of our persons before God, which are the constituents of *justification*. It includes the new birth, through the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, which is the doctrine of *regeneration*. It includes the believer's growth in holiness, until he attains "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," which is *sanctification*. And finally, it involves the saint's translation to heaven, to take possession of the child's inheritance, which is *glorification*. All, therefore, that the word salvation implies—in deliverance from the *guilt*, the *stain*, the *dominion*, and the *being* of sin—is potentially included in the idea of ADOPTION; and is in every particular wrought out when that idea comes to be realized in its final results. Whoever undertakes the full exposition of the word, finds himself carried around the entire circle of revealed religion; and touches, as he swings, the doctrines of sovereign election by the Father, of redemption by the Son, of the indwelling of the Spirit, of union with Christ by faith, and of joint-heir-

ship with Him in eternal glory. If the gospel has any term that is *generic*, in which is logically contained all that constitutes the experience of the Christian, it is ADOPTION.

Yet this word, pregnant with all the wealth of grace, is borrowed from the Family. "How shall I put thee among the children? Thou shalt call Me, my Father, and shalt not turn away from Me." "To as many as received Him, even to as many as believed on His name, gave He power to become the sons of God." Let it be remembered that an intelligible revelation presupposes an understood language as its vehicle. Mysterious as may be the truths unfolded, they must be translated to the human mind through ideas familiar to it. Human relations must afford the analogies by which divine things shall be represented. If there are no pre-existing types out of which a language may be created, then they must be appointed by God, (as was largely the case with the ceremonial law,) to found, in the sensible experience of man, the explicit terms which a divine revela-

tion may require.\* Just so, the Family was constituted, at the beginning, as the matrix in which the language of grace should be cast. Its perfectly defined relations yielded the conceptions out of which the gospel frames its terminology. Blot out from the mind all that is associated with the Family, and the word adoption becomes an unmeaning cypher, which can never be interpreted for the want of some mediating term. We find the Family, therefore, subserving a churchly purpose under this dispensation of grace, as supporting, through its analogies, the very conceptions upon which that dispensation rests.

2. This will be more obvious, by considering *how perfectly the fatherhood of God, and the sonship of believers, are foreshadowed in the corresponding human relations in the household.* God, in the gospel, is our Father, not in the vague sense of being our Creator and Preserver, but in the covenant sense of being our

\*See this largely illustrated in a popular book, by Walker, entitled "the Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation."

Redeemer and our Portion. The primary relations of creation and providence may possibly constitute the natural basis for the higher and more spiritual relations of grace; but they are nevertheless clearly distinguished in the Scriptures. God is the Father of all the redeemed, in the sense that they are made "partakers of the Divine nature," through the principle of holiness, first implanted, and then sustained, by constant communications from Himself; in the sense that they are lifted above the plane of mere subjects of law, to a more close and blessed communion with Him, as the dear children of His love; and in the sense that He makes Himself over to them, as their everlasting portion and inheritance. The language of His covenant is, "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Corresponding with this, the spirit of evangelical obedience is *filial*, as contrasted with the spirit that is *legal* and *slavish*. It springs from the principle of love, under the constant fascination of all that is beautiful and glorious

in the holiness of God. With the entire consent of the will, under the sanction of reason, and with the concurrence of the heart, the homage of a loyal service is rendered, which is never intimidated by fear, nor prompted by mercenary advantage. It is the free commerce of a dutiful and loving child, who rests upon the parental bosom, and finds its joy in the parental smile.

The beauty of the analogy, however, is not simply that in these human relations are found the figures of the true, but that it adumbrates the very methods by which this gracious fatherhood of God is accomplished. Adoption with God is not a legal fiction, as it is with man, who may treat as sons those who by no possibility can be made actually such. But we *become* the sons of God, first, by a substantive union with Jesus Christ, who is the Only Begotten of the Father; and, secondly, by a veritable spiritual birth, "being born not of blood, nor of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The natural is a type of the spiritual. We become the children of men by an actual

birth after the flesh, and by virtue of a law of connexion, which places us potentially in the loins of those by whom we are begotten. We become the children of God through an actual birth of the Spirit, by whom we are quickened; and this by our gracious connexion with Christ, who is the Son of God. In Him we are "chosen to be sons," by the sovereign election of the Father; and to Him we are given in the covenant of redemption, as HIS SEED, for the very purpose of being made new creatures in Him, by the quickening power of the Holy Ghost. God is our Father in this dispensation of grace, because He is already "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." He, who is the sole Proprietor of the relation and the title, shares them both with those whom He has redeemed, who are united with Him by faith, and thus have "power to become the sons of God." Wonderful constitution of the Family! which is thus ordained to prefigure the stupendous methods of grace, by the very processes through which it was created. And, blessed be God, the Family abides, that its analogies may up-



hold and elucidate those principles which it originally typified, and thus fulfils its churchly office to the end of the world.

3. Let us trace next *the principle of representation, as it is imbedded in the structure and functions of the Family.* God's dealings with man have always been by covenant: under natural religion, through the covenant of works; under revealed religion, through the covenant of grace. In both alike the principle of representation is recognized, in the relations which the first Adam and the second sustain to their respective seeds. We have thus incidentally brought out the Family feature, in the bare statement of the principle. The first man is constituted the federal head of those who were putatively in his loins as their natural parent. So closely, indeed, are the two connected, that no little confusion has sprung up, in theological circles, from not keeping them sufficiently distinct. But the fact is not a little remarkable, that the original covenant should plant itself upon the Family idea as its basis. The principle of representation fastens upon



the parental relation, and works itself into view through it. The representative with whom Jehovah deals, is not a being arbitrarily appointed for that purpose, but is one from whom the race springs as its natural root. The typical idea, thus drawn from the structure of the Family, is carried over into the economy of grace ; in which, by a similar covenant relation, those redeemed by the blood of Christ become *His seed* for ever, through a divine and spiritual birth.

It will not be amiss to notice further, how the Family, in its functional arrangements, upholds and exemplifies this principle of representation. The husband, for example, is the head of the wife ; with whom she blends in union so intimate, that ideally she no longer separately exists, but becomes “one body” with him. We shall have occasion to refer to this hereafter, and will not anticipate what needs to be more articulately expounded. It is enough for our present purpose that, in all transactions before the world, he, as her head, is her constant representative. Through him all her

privileges and franchises are maintained, and the cover of his name is the broad shield behind which she finds protection and defence. In like manner, the parent represents the child ; is the natural and legal guardian, holding in possession the child's rights, and is held responsible for the child's conduct. During the whole period of minority, the parent is the representative of God, in the authority which he wields, and in the providential watchfulness which gathers the brood beneath his wing. Is there no churchly ministry in offices like these, which so constantly expound the great principle upon which, as upon a pivot, the entire system of human redemption is made to turn ?

4. *Mediation is necessarily implicated in Representation*, but has features of its own which merit special consideration. The traces of it to be found in the domestic economy may be more faint, but they should not, for that reason, be overlooked. We have seen, in a previous chapter, how the first father was the organ of primeval worship, and the prophet to convey the tenets of the primeval faith to the offspring

of his loins. Also, when sacrifices were instituted under the dispensation of grace, the patriarch was invested with the functions of priesthood; and, as the appointed mediator, conveyed in the patriarchal blessing the utterance of the Divine approval. These things need not, therefore, be repeated; especially as every tyro knows that they were all typical prefigurations of Him who should appear, in the fulness of time, as both the Sacrifice and the Priest of the universal Church.

Beyond this, however, mediation is interwoven into the very texture of the Family. In the language which we quote from another pen, "The child comes to the enjoyment of life through the pain and travail of another; from early perils and death he is saved through the self-sacrificing watchfulness of the mother. The patient toil of the father is the price paid to save him from ignorance and want. Indeed, the whole of parental duty is a system of mediation, often attended with suffering and self-denial, but always impelled by love." If these hints should be deemed obscure, and the an-

alogy but faint, it must be remembered that the doctrine of mediation by Jesus Christ was reserved as the great revelation of God's grace to man. It is enough if, in the daily outworking of Family life, there should be found even this analogy to hold up the principle against oversight and forgetfulness.

Certainly, the purest illustration of that immeasurable love which made the Saviour's soul an offering for sin, is to be found in the self-sacrificing devotion of the parent. It is the most unselfish affection known to the human heart. Scarcely is the child born ere the parent sinks his own ease and comfort out of sight, and lives henceforth in the life of his offspring. No labour is too exacting, no care too corroding, no watchfulness too exhausting, to be declined in behalf of those whom he has brought into being. Not to dwell upon the fact that the birth itself is accomplished at the peril of the mother's life, the ceaseless anxiety and toil which succeed render the mother's office as nearly sacrificial in its character as that of any creature can be. When, therefore, we search

amidst human relations for the nearest type of the sacrificial work of Him who was bruised for us, it must be found in that of the parent; whose love exceeds every other in its fervour, in its patience, in its constancy, in its self-abnegation—outliving shame, degradation, and even crime—stronger than death, and feeding upon memories which fall upon the soul like shadows of the happy past, that has been swallowed up in the grave for ever.







## CHAPTER IV.



# THE SYMBOLICAL MYSTERY OF MARRIAGE.







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### THE SYMBOLICAL MYSTERY OF MARRIAGE.

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"Come hither; I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."  
REVELATION XXI. 9.



IN the preceding chapter were brought to view several distinctive features of the scheme of grace, as illustrated in the Family constitution. The parallel is far from being concluded; and the topic now to be considered is so impressive that we single it out for presentation in a chapter by itself.

We refer to *the law of marriage, as symbolizing the mystical union of Christ and the Church*. The analogy between the two must be exceedingly close to justify the frequent allusion, in the Scriptures, to the one as the most expressive symbol of the other. The reader's

memory will instantly reproduce the passages in which the comparison is elaborated. If not, it will be refreshed by turning in the Old Testament to the forty-fifth Psalm, to the fifty-fourth chapter of the Prophecy of Isaiah, to the sixteenth of the Prophecy of Ezekiel, to the second of that of Hosea, and to the beautiful allegory in the Song of Solomon. It will be seen that we omit all reference to the incidental allusions which are scattered profusely through these ancient writings, and signalize only those expanded utterances which are pushed quite into the dimensions of the parable. In the New Testament the reader may consult Matthew ix. 15, with its parallels in the other evangelists; 2 Corinthians xi. 2; Revelation xix. 7, 8, together with xxi. 9. But the *locus classicus* on this point is the extended passage in Ephesians v. 23-32, which we will quote entire, because of its emphasis: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church; and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own

husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church; for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

Manifestly, the Apostle finds in marriage something beyond mere *analogy*. It is in his view a *symbol*, the significance of which becomes more clear in the light cast back upon it from the thing symbolized. He is enforcing the duties of the domestic state, and begins

with those arising from the conjugal relation. His method is to illustrate these by the relations of Christ to His Church. He explains the former by the latter, as being more perfectly understood. It is the archetype, having its fulfilment in Christian experience, which is brought to bear upon the elucidation of the type. The relative duties of marriage are more fully comprehended when the essential oneness of the relation is compared with the oneness of the believer with Christ. The husband, for example, is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the Head of the Church. The wife is to be subject to her own husband, just as the Church is subject to Christ. The husband is to love the wife, just as Christ loved the Church. He is to nourish her as his own body, just as Christ nourisheth the Church, which is His body. The parallel is drawn out in all these details; and then the very terms are cited in which the law of marriage was first given, in order to show that the two are *one flesh*, precisely as believers are members "of Christ, of His flesh and of His bones." And,

finally, the whole application of the one to the other is pronounced to be “a mystery,” in itself incomprehensible, yet clearly revealed of God. The whole form of exposition assumes that there was a mystical feature in marriage, designed to prefigure the mystical union of Christ and the Church ; which, like every other type, would not be fully measured until its fulfilment in the antitype.

We press this fact, that St. Paul is not here explaining union with Christ by marriage, for which a simple *analogy* would suffice ; but he is illustrating marriage by union with Christ, which seems to constitute the former a *symbol* of the latter. A “mystery” was put into the most fundamental of our natural relations, and was kept a secret through all the ages, until the corresponding “mystery” was revealed in our spiritual relations, which cleared up its meaning—the hieroglyph over the very portals of marriage, not to be deciphered until the key was furnished in the work of redemption. What sanctity is lent to the conjugal bond, when from the beginning the husband was de-

signed as the type of Christ, and the wife a type of the Church, and human marriage a symbol of the sacred espousals between the Lord and His people! If there be a holy shrine upon the earth, it is the Family; which wraps within its hidden folds the "great mystery" of grace, the believer's living union with his living head.

It is time, however, to push our way into the heart of this typical "mystery," and trace the correspondences at which the Apostle so distinctly hints.

1. *The creation of the woman clearly symbolizes the origin of the Church.* She was taken from the side of the man; was a part of his substance; and though builded into a separate person, she holds her life as still involved in his, and exists ideally in him. The unity of the man was not broken in her creation, but is rather more distinctly expressed. The two sides of his nature, the active and the passive, are brought out, not to be disjoined, but to be conjoined in a higher unity, in which their reciprocal influence shall be more conspicuously exhibited. She is made, therefore, in every re-

spect, the counterpart of the man. With perfect identity of nature—corporeal, intellectual, and moral—there runs through her entire organization the distinction of sex. The same, yet different, the likeness and the variation mark her throughout as the complement of the man. We have had occasion already to denote all this. It is, therefore, only for the use to be made of it in the application, that we repeat what has been said in another connexion: that this duality exists only for the purpose of returning into the unity from which it diverged. The combination of the two in a voluntary and moral union, makes a complete man as before. It is an original and grand device of Divine Wisdom to bring man to a better knowledge of his own nature; when it is presented on its distinct, yet cognate sides, each being the reflected image of the other, and each adapted in its very modifications to resume its counterpart and fellow.

In like manner, believers are “created in Christ Jesus;” and with them, of course, the Church. Only in Him could they become the



subjects of that grace through which they believe and are saved. The difficulty lies at the very initiation of a scheme of grace. If they are fallen and condemned in their first representative, how shall God, consistently with His justice and truth, think towards them His first thoughts of compassion and of love? The solution is found in the covenant of redemption, formed in the depths of God's eternal counsel. In this, the Son undertakes, in His turn, to be the Representative of a seed whom the Father shall give to Him. For these He consents to stand, in the full assumption of their legal responsibilities. As viewed, therefore, in Him, their disabilities are cancelled. They become, in Him, once more the objects of Divine favour. Thus, the Church has always existed ideally and potentially in Christ, just as the woman first existed in the man. As the woman was taken from the man in her individual subsistence, so all the seed of Christ are individually renewed by the Holy Ghost. And as the woman in her distinction returns to the man, in the movement of her own affections, so does



the believer return, in the acting of his faith, to that glorious Head in whom first he was chosen to eternal life. The analogy is perfect; and whatever be the lower ends accomplished in the mystery of woman's derivation, its higher office is to symbolize the "mystery concerning Christ and His Church."

2. We have not yet probed the deeper secret in marriage: *the blending of two persons in one, with the distinct consciousness in both of their separateness.* This is the pith of the Apostle's argument, which, with its epigrammatic clauses, is yet thoroughly compact, without the slightest digression. Christ is said to be the Saviour of the Church, and thus acquires it as His body. Not only so; He also "sanctified and cleansed it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." Thus, she is "adorned as a bride for her husband," and is prepared to be "the body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." This union is not merely civil and legal; it is mystical and

vital. Our life is derived from Him, and is continually nourished by the communications of His grace. We are thus the members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones; through which come our resurrection from the grave, and final glorification in heaven.

Exactly parallel with this is the mystery of marriage, in which "the husband is joined unto the wife, and they two become one flesh." The extraction of the woman from the man marks her as his flesh. She returns to him by the preference of her own desire, thus transfiguring the natural unity into one that is moral. In loving her, the husband only loveth his own flesh; and he nourisheth and cherisheth the one even as he does the other. Still the union of the two in one is profoundly mysterious. It is effected by that coalescence of the will which is denoted by the term *submission*; which we remarked before, when handling this point, is far deeper in its significance than the term *obedience*. Its peculiar emphasis lies in the fact that it rises above the determinations of the will, to the will itself, and blends the two

personalities just where the personality essentially resides.

Yet in all this marvellous procedure, a clear consciousness of personal distinction is preserved. The woman is still herself. She is a co-factor in the constitution of the house. She has her individual functions as wife and mother, and could not more emphatically assert her own personality than in the act of choice, by which she blends her being with that of another. It is a mystery wholly by itself in nature, which furnishes no analogy for its interpretation. For this we must come into the sphere of grace, where the mystery of Christ and His Church points back to it as the symbol of itself. The life acquired for the believer through the death of Christ, and held by Him in trust under tenure of law, is communicated by the Holy Ghost, the Quickener. Being born again, he cleaves to his blessed Head by a faith which carries the soul over in a full conveyance, as His possession for ever. The union is voluntary and spiritual; and is mystical, because wrought in the free exercise of that will through

which his own personality is affirmed. Though partaker of a Divine life, there is no apotheosis of the creature, who obeys and loves in the constant sense of his personal distinction as a lost sinner saved by grace.

3. *The priority of Christ's love finds its shadow in that of the husband.* Paul signalizes this, when he says, "Even as Christ loved the Church." In like manner, the husband's is the challenging love; that of the wife is simply reciprocal. Under this aspect, his is the superior love, in being the original. It constitutes him the organ and representative of that high principle by which the two are united. We think it is for this reason he is represented as the party leaving father and mother, that he may be joined unto his wife; and this, too, in face of the fact that the sacrifice is greater with the woman, in the surrender of privileges to which she clings with the most exquisite sensibility. In the creation of a new household he must take the initiative, by breaking up the ties of the old. His love, too, is always of the active and providing sort, shrinking from no toil, and

receding from no sacrifice, that he may nourish and cherish her who is henceforward as his own body. In this there is just the faintest analogy to that sacrifice which Christ made when He gave Himself for the Church.

4. Nor can it be omitted, in this parallel, that *the wife, like the Church, holds all that she has from her head*. From the instant the union is consummated, her name, her station, her privileges, and her rights are all derived by association with him. With a perfect community of interests, her title to everything vests exclusively in her representative before the law. Need we press the resemblance to the case of the believer, who has nothing apart from Christ? His title to life, his communion with God, his personal sanctification, his hope of heaven, all depend absolutely upon that union which makes him one with his Lord.

5. Finally, *marriage is indissoluble, except by death*. Can anything earthly more perfectly represent the indestructibility of that bond which holds Christ and His people together throughout eternity? "For I am persuaded

that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Only one thing besides death may cancel the marriage covenant; and that is, an utter apostasy from the fellowship for which it provides; and if there could be such an apostasy from Christ in a truly regenerate soul, it would by its nature operate a total dissolution between the two. But blessed be the God of our salvation, here is where "grace superabounds," and the analogy breaks. "Having loved His own, He loved them to the end." He will "keep those whom the Father hath given Him;" and "none shall ever pluck them out of His hand."

What can more clearly establish the churchly aspect of the Family, than to find the system of grace striking its roots down into that primary relation by which the house is constituted, and selecting the sweetest and earliest of all human bonds as the type of the believer's life in Christ the Redeemer?



## CHAPTER V.



THE CHURCH THE FAMILY OF GOD.







## CHAPTER V.

### THE CHURCH THE FAMILY OF GOD.

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*"I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."*

EPHESIANS iii. 14, 15.



THE significance of the Family in its relations to revealed religion is not exhausted, until another great fact is considered, viz.:

THAT, UNDER ALL DISPENSATIONS ALIKE, THE CHURCH OF GOD IS REPRESENTED AS BEING HIS FAMILY. In what

has already been said on the topics of adoption and mediation, this has been shown in reference to individual believers; and as these collectively constitute the Church on earth, this proposition will hold equally true of it. But the object of this chapter will be to exhibit the testimonies which present the *organized Church* as sustaining a household relation to Jehovah.

These are so numerous as to require a skilful classification; in order to bring them all under review. And when the more direct testimonies have been recited, there will remain a large body of Scripture, in which the general idea is interwoven into the whole texture of the language. It is one of the evidences of inspiration, that the great doctrines of grace are conveyed to such an extent by *implication*. So that, if a destructive criticism should succeed in blotting out the formal and explicit statements of Christian doctrine, it would be found so thoroughly incorporated in other passages, that the entire web of Scripture language must be torn to shreds before the truth could be eliminated. This is just one of those marvellous expedients of Divine wisdom which brings to nought all the subtlety of human exposition, when it undertakes the sad work of obliterating the record which God has given of Himself.

Perhaps the faintest allusion to the Family will be found in those places where *the sanctuary of public worship is denominated the Lord's house*. David, for example, felt it a re-

proach that he should "dwell in a house of cedar, while the Ark of God dwelt in curtains." Yet at the dedication of the temple on Mount Moriah, which originated in this pious thought, Solomon, his son, confessed, "Will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built?" We cite this passage in preference to all others of this class, because it embodies the idea that the temple, as the tabernacle before it, was the dwelling-place of Jehovah. Here, as a Father, He gathered the children of His covenant, and nourished them with the ordinances of His worship. This was His earthly house, in which was the symbol of His special presence; making the Family relation to underlie the form of the language. We do not, however, emphasize this, beyond making it a point of departure to another view.

*Examine then the force of the same term, as applied to the collective people of Israel. In places almost beyond count, they are styled the House or Family of God. Take but one ex-*

ample from Amos: "Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole Family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, you only have I known of all the families of the earth." This is but a specimen of those passages in which the whole people of Israel are considered under the aspect of a *Family*; and a Family brought up and nourished by Jehovah himself, so as to be *His Family*, to which He was bound by peculiar ties. The reader need not be told that this is the historic style in which the ancient people of God are addressed throughout the Old Testament: "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people;" "for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My first-born."

But we may rise a grade higher, to those passages in which *the Church is definitely styled the House of God*. "Every house is builded by some man; but He that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant; but Christ, as a Son over His own house, whose house are we."

Again, in the same epistle, Christ is called "An High Priest over the house of God;" which can only be His Church. Paul, too, delivers certain instructions to his son Timothy, that he "may know how he ought to behave himself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God." And Peter declares that "judgment must begin at the house of God;" which is put in contrast with "them that obey not the Gospel of God." The conclusion cannot be escaped, that the Church, as a spiritual body, is viewed, in all these passages, as a common household, over which God presides as the Father of all His Redeemed. This inference will be sealed by the definite testimony of St. Paul in Ephesians: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole Family in heaven and earth is named." All the saints upon earth, all the glorified in heaven, and those elder sons of God, the elect angels, gathered into one body, of which Christ is the head; these form "the whole Family" of God for ever, deriving their name from Him as the Everlasting Father, as

the paronomasia in the original most clearly shows.

With these explicit statements before us, there is no occasion to introduce the incidental references to the Family as the ground idea of the Church, running through innumerable other passages. Indeed, the attempt would only construct for the reader a concordance of texts, without, perhaps, strengthening the conviction already produced.

It will be more satisfactory to trace the points of resemblance between the two, showing how the essential features of the Family are reproduced in the Church. One or two of the most striking will answer all the purposes of illustration.

1. *Look, then, at the principles upon which fellowship or communion rests in both.* The fellowship of the Family does not found upon mere association, nor simply upon community of interest, as in society at large; but upon community of origin, upon natural relationship, and upon instinctive affection. It is of one blood, and a common life pervades the whole.



The Family is an organism; it grows by virtue of its own life from its proper root, and ramifies into all the branches which spring from a common trunk. The children of a house are bound to each other by the one tie that connects them with the parents from whom they are born. As the circle of relationship widens, the tie is less close, but it still shoots from the stem which is the original support of all. There may be a dozen circles, but they are all concentric; and it is this that gives unity to the tribe, and even to the nation into which eventually it expands. With all the variations, then, of individual temperament—nay, with all the antagonisms to which this gives rise—there is a prevailing harmony, which the utmost perverseness can scarcely destroy, springing out of this oneness of origin. All bear the same name as their signature; all live upon the same bounty, and are sheltered by the same providence; all obey the same authority, are moulded by the same discipline, and are at last heirs to the same possessions; while through all these interests runs the electric current of an instinc-

tive affection, making each member a partaker of one common Family life. This is the basis upon which the communion of the household is founded; it is the fellowship of blood.

Precisely so with the communion of the saints. It does not rest upon the accidents of living together in one place, of worshipping together in one building, of sitting together under the same ministrations of the gospel; much less does it depend upon the conventionalisms of ordinary society. These are all alike contingent, liable to be interrupted, and are continually broken through, without impairing the integrity of that spiritual fellowship which abides amidst life's constant changes. Nor is this fellowship to be confounded with those sweet friendships which turn upon the natural qualities, which render some more agreeable to us than others. However it may be heightened by these when they chance to combine, they are wholly distinct in their origin and in their nature. Christian communion, as the term imports, rests upon a common relation sustained to one Head. It is never found ex-



cept with those who have been redeemed by the same sacrifice, who exercise the same faith in Him by whom it was offered, who have been renewed by the same Spirit, cherish the same hopes, and are expectants of the same joy. It is the one life manifesting itself in the same experience, which brings them together as one Family in Christ. They have substantially the same conflicts, are agitated by similar doubts and fears, breathe the same desires after holiness, engage in the same toils, and look to one heaven as their common home. They are the children of the same Father; and whenever the seal of that parentage can be discovered in a common spiritual likeness, the heart opens with a spontaneous love, which is as truly the instinct of the new nature, as the Family affection is an instinct of the old.

Here, then, is where we are to look for the true unity of the Church; not in massive ecclesiastical organizations, which are but imperfect representations of it; not in the shallow sentimentalism which affects the language of Christian love, while it betrays the very principles

upon which a masculine and virtuous love can alone rest. The true unity is a "unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace;" a unity in faith, a unity in love, a unity in the graces of the Spirit, a unity in Christ, the one Source of the one life which all possess. Blessed be God, this is a unity which is not broken by diversity in opinion, by variety of individual character, nor by distribution into parts and sections. It is a unity that overrides the artificial grades into which society may choose to arrange itself. It takes up rich and poor, learned and ignorant, bond and free, as the constituents of one and the same household of faith; and out of the very discords of jarring disputation produces a harmony in which these blend. For, most certainly, the unity that rises out of diversity, and causes that diversity to recognize its essential agreements, is a deeper and freer unity than can ever proceed from a dull and monotonous uniformity. It is just the difference between the prolonged note of a single chord and the blending of a thousand strings, in the full harmony of song. But of this spiritual fellow-

ship in the Church of God there is no perfect earthly type but that found in the Family.

2. A second illustration may be drawn from *the discipline which is exercised in both*. In the State, as the empire of law, the suffering visited upon transgression is predominantly *penal*. The sword in the hand of the magistrate is to punish. It smites in the interest of justice. And though the State may properly seek to arrest crime by methods of prevention, and to devise measures of reform, still it is a sad omen when this spirit is pushed to an extent which obscures the sense of a robust justice, so necessary to the preservation of society. It is not requisite to pursue this thought further, however tempting the digression may be. It will be seen at a glance that, in this particular, the province of the Church and of the Family is entirely different. Here the object is not punishment, but correction. The ends in both are disciplinary. This is preeminently true of the Church, because it realizes the purposes of grace; and it is true of the Family, because the system of grace subordi-

nates it as a mighty agency for the training and salvation of man. A father may chastise his child, even with severity, but it is always in measure, and under the prompting of the purest love. He corrects that he may save. Whilst, in reference to his own authority, the act may be vindictory, in reference to the child it is reformatory. As soon as the ends of discipline are attained, all motive ceases for the infliction of pain, and the instinct of parental love pleads for the sufferer. The effort is studiously made to mingle smiles with frowns, and rewards with censures; so that, under their combined influence, the character may be formed to habits of virtue.

In like manner, God sets these two, the one over against the other, to the end that man may be wise. When our sins provoke His just displeasure, it is the displeasure of a Father who is grieved, rather than of a Judge who is incensed. And the reader well knows that, when His discipline is expounded in the Scriptures, it is under this very analogy, which is taken from the Family. “Whom the Lord loveth

He chasteneth; and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." Similar language is used in the Old Testament. Speaking of David's seed, which means the seed of Christ, of whom David is here but the type, God is represented as saying, "If his children forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless, My loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail." Language could not more accurately discriminate the visitation which is penal, from the suffering that is corrective. And in this very distinction we see how deep the analogy lies, by which the Church is interpreted to us as being the true Family of God on earth.





## CHAPTER VI.

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# THE FAMILY IN ITS OFFICES OF INSTRUCTION AND WORSHIP.







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*"And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."*—  
DEUTERONOMY xi. 19.



HIS chapter will close the examination we are making of the constitution and design of the Family. The subject is, indeed, far from being exhausted; but the object of this essay has been simply to present it in its general aspect, without entering minutely into details. We shall be content, therefore, with offering the only topic which remains, THE ADAPTATION OF THE FAMILY TO OFFICES OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION AND WORSHIP.

From the earliest period in the history of the Church, the duty of Family instruction has

been emphasized as the most important of all agencies in perpetuating the knowledge of Divine truth. In Deuteronomy xi. 19, the command is thus laid upon Israel: "Therefore shall ye lay up these My words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes; and ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." The same injunction is renewed in the parting address of Moses, just before he ascended Mount Nebo to die: "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day; which ye shall command your children to observe to do all the words of this law." In the new Testament, it is only necessary to refer to Paul's commendation of Timothy, as one that "from a child had known the holy Scriptures," and in whom the immense advantages of a pious descent were signalized, as he "called to remembrance the unfeigned faith that dwelt first in his grandmother Lois,

and in his mother Eunice." Without pausing to collate the testimonies upon this topic, it will serve our purpose better to indicate the conspicuous advantages possessed by the Family for the transmission of this traditional knowledge and influence.

For example, *the parent is the only teacher who is permitted to stand at the beginnings of human life, and to shape the first thoughts which arise in the mind.* The infant is endowed at birth with certain capacities, as yet wholly undeveloped. The very senses, which are the inlets of all knowledge, require to be trained to their respective functions: the eye to see, the ear to hear, the touch to discern. Gradually the involuntary movements of the muscles and limbs are brought under the control of the will. The imperceptible education of the mental faculties begins in the cradle, far beyond the point which the memory is able to reach. The first observation has to be made; the first comparison to be instituted; the first judgment to be framed; and so onward, until, at maturity, the perfect man is developed in the

furniture of all his powers, corporeal and intellectual.

Just here, at the very springs of our being, the parent is appointed to stand. He watches the mind, as it first awakes to conscious activity. He answers its earliest questions, when it looks forth in wonder upon the strange world into which it is introduced. He seizes the first thoughts, and directs them upward to God, who has "made everything beautiful in its time." He shapes the first feeling of reverence in a religious mould, and turns the earliest affection towards the Great Being who is the common Father of us all. Is it possible to overstate these advantages of his position for giving shape and direction to the immortal spirit which opens its career in his hand? Hence the proverbial power of these infantile impressions. However they may be overborne, or seemingly erased, they abide with a secret and reserved power. When disappointments shall break the spell of life's delusions; when sickness and sorrow shall place us under arrest; or when death comes, with its fierce execution

upon all earthly hopes—how often they arise, to lead the soul back to God and to peace. Eternity alone will reveal the value of these early associations, as the silver threads which have bound even the worst of sinners to a destiny of blessedness and glory in the kingdom of heaven.

Consider, next, *the instinctive affections which bring their aid, both in imparting and in receiving instruction.* Fortunately, these affections do not depend upon the will for their existence, but have their ground in nature. The will may regulate their exercise, but does not determine their being. Thus the child, with the supreme sense of dependence which characterizes its first experience, looks up to the parent with a reverence that is essentially religious. It knows no being who is greater, or higher. The parent stands to it as God Himself, in whom it consciously lives and moves. The whole being of the child is at first bound within that of the parent, who appears to it almost as creator. The thought is almost overwhelming in its solemnity, that in any human

relation we should stand in such resemblance to the Infinite God, as to *give being* to another like ourselves. No wonder the parent should be charged with such a providence as that which watches over the fortunes of the child, and that he should be filled with such a wealth of love as stumbles at no sacrifice for its good. And no wonder that, in the child's view, a sort of "Divinity should hedge about" the parent, and that affection should be mingled with a species of awe. But what must be the influence of this in rendering the child docile and tractable? What weight belongs to the utterances of one whose wisdom, and power, and love are to the child the very shadow of the Divine! What school can equal that of the Family, where the teacher stands at the fountain head of our being, armed with prerogatives so sacred as these!

The complement to both these thoughts is found in *the parent's authority to enforce his teachings*. Education does not consist solely in the communication of knowledge. Its primary aim is discipline. The dormant faculties need to be aroused and developed. By a

gentle and constant compulsion they must be held to certain exercises, until the permanent habits are formed which make the student and the thinker. This is, if possible, more conspicuously true in the sphere of morals. Virtue must not only be inculcated as a doctrine, it must be practised as a principle, and be acquired as a habit. The precepts which are enjoined must be reproduced in successive acts, until the character itself is cast perfectly into their mould. Here all that has been said above applies with pre-eminent force. Armed with despotic authority, which distinctly reflects the Divine supremacy, the parent enforces his instructions upon the will. The child is held with a firm hand to the practice of what he learns. The indolence and the rebellion of his nature are both held under control, until the duty, which was at first irksome, becomes easy by repetition. Of course, we will not be understood as endorsing the Pelagian view of making men Christians only by the power of habit. But if the Holy Spirit must renew the soul "dead in trespasses and sins,"



we need not overlook the training influence of such an institute as the Family, in which men are fitted to discharge the offices of virtue which devolve upon them in life. To this end, the teacher first provided for the young is supplied with the high authority to enforce the practice of knowledge as fast as it is acquired, until the confirmed habit shall establish it as a second nature, and make it as simple as to breathe.

All this is not accomplished at once; but *a long novitiate, covering nearly one third part of human life, affords the parent opportunity for repeating and deepening these impressions.*

It matters not what may occur to interrupt the continuity of the lessons. If the Family is permitted to remain unbroken by death, the pressure of parental influence is always felt. Even the child at school is not removed from it. He is surrounded by it as an atmosphere; and every recollection of home carries him back under its unseen power. The length and steadiness of this pressure is one of the leading features of this beneficent discipline. Though it is modified each year, to accommo-



date itself to the child's expansion and growth, this very change only adds freshness to its power ; which becomes more energetic just in proportion as it is more relaxed in its authority, and calls into play the voluntary virtue of the child.

During this long period, there is the advantage of *contiguity to those who are under training, and the manifold forms in which instruction is given.* As to the former, the parent enjoys a sort of omnipresence. In earlier years, the child is constantly under the eye of its guardians ; and these are the years when the foundations of character are laid. When the growth of years removes it from this closeness of inspection, the influence which this has exerted carries the presence of the parent mysteriously along in a certain sense of its power, even where it is not visible. It is a profound truth, and as mysterious as it is true, this diffusion of parental oversight, which reaches on to the years of our manhood. Perhaps it is one of the features of that resemblance which makes the parent so much the repre-

sentative of God in the household. We will not press these analogies. We will leave them to the reader's own thought, with only this suggestion: that in the modified creatorship of the parent, in the power of that instinctive reverence and affection by which he holds the child, in the absoluteness of his authority, and in the seeming omnipresence of his influence, there is much that invests the relation with awe, and which explains the position of the fifth commandment in the decalogue.

In what school but this does the teacher come in contact with all the shifting moods of the pupil—in his seasons of elevation and gladness, and in moments of depression and ennui—in the hours when the bounding heart pours out its love in all the gush of enthusiasm, and when, coy and shy, it retires within itself, and chews the cud of its own reflections? In these varying tempers, the skilful parent drops the seeds of religious knowledge in exact accordance with the mood; so that in a thousand forms it challenges conviction, and the truth, resisted in one shape, is accepted in another.

Combine all these, and the value of the Family, as an institute for conveying religious instruction, is seen to be paramount; fulfilling thus one of the most important functions of the Church, which, therefore, subsidizes it to accomplish her own high and gracious ends.

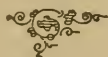
The Scriptures equally emphasize the household as the altar upon which the fire of a pure religious WORSHIP should ever burn. They declare that God "will pour out His fury upon the Families that call not upon His name." The patriarch Abraham was specially commended for his observance of family religion: "for I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." In the New Testament, the houses are carefully noted which gave a shelter to the infant Church, under its new organization; and the pious family at Bethany afforded a constant retreat to the weary Saviour, when He sought refreshment in the toil of His work. Wherever the ark of God resides, it brings a blessing with it, like that which rested upon the house of Obededom.

The Family is peculiarly fitted in its arrangements to preserve the worship of God upon earth. The head of it, if pious, is a personal representative of true religion to all beneath his wing. The influence of a godly character is diffused through all the relations which he sustains, and the example of his devotions throws a savour of worship over the household. The spirit of consecration rests upon it, constituting it a temple, in which God delights to reveal His presence.

Then there are *distinct acts of worship* in which the household is daily led. As often as bread is broken, the solemn blessing of God is invoked, as “the Giver of every good and perfect gift;” and in their daily repasts the house is conducted in worship before Him who opens His hand, and supplies the wants of every living thing. When the morning and evening sacrifice is offered, and the pious father leads his offspring in daily prayer at the throne of grace, the Family is seen in its true character as the Church of God. When bereavement clothes the house in mourning; at each recurring an-

niversary of birth and death; and upon those occasions of reunion, when the scattered members are re-assembled around the paternal hearth; O! how various and how solemn are the acts of worship, in which the Family appears as the Church in miniature! On each recurring Sabbath, when the father and the mother sit at either end of the family pew, with their offspring between them, does not the great congregation appear as a collection of smaller churches aggregated in one large assembly of worshippers?

But enough. If the Family holds the knowledge of God amongst men in the instruction it affords, much more is it the depository of His worship. Each pious household is a separate fibre of those roots by which the Church of the living God takes hold upon the earth, and preserves its existence in a sinful world.

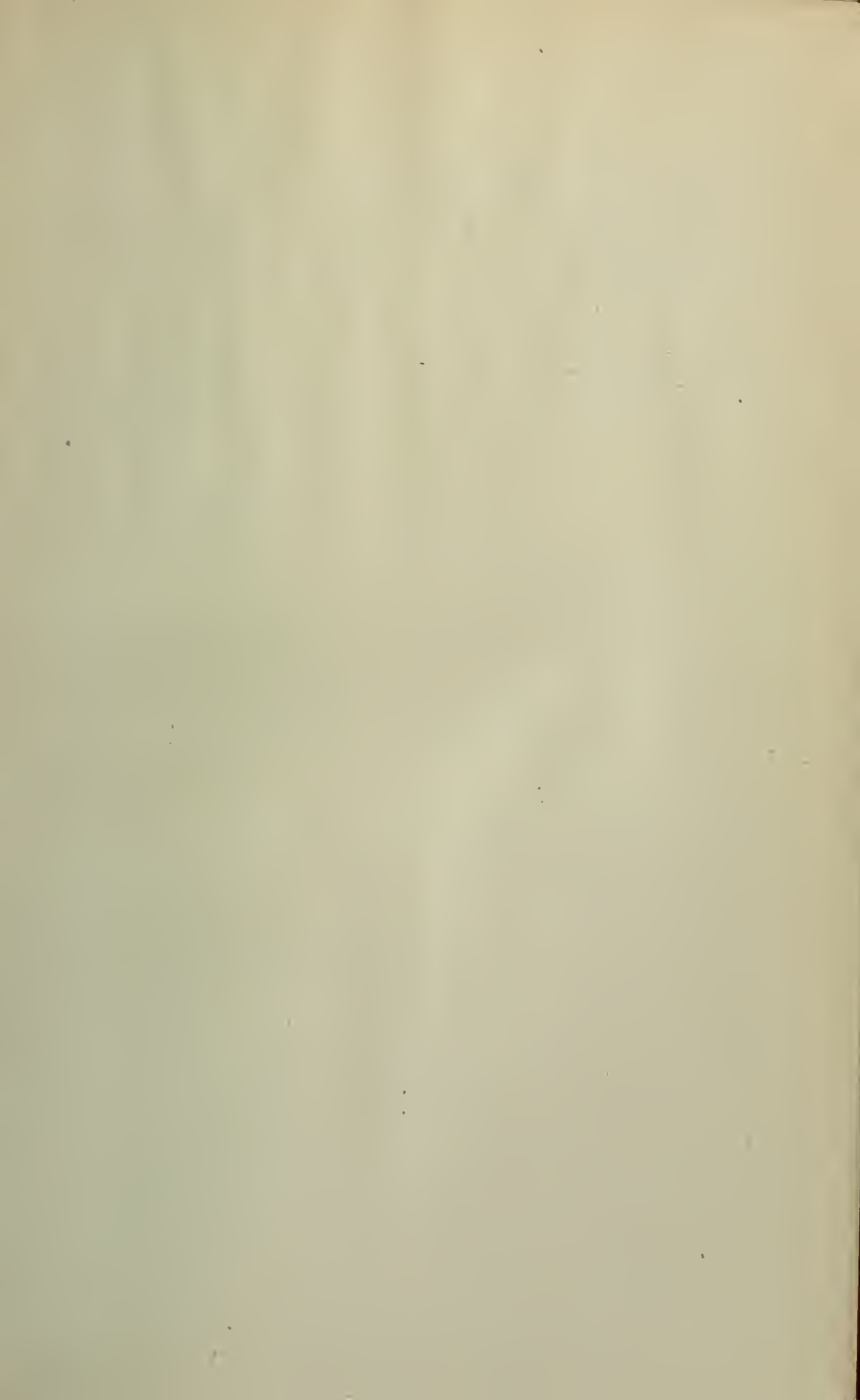












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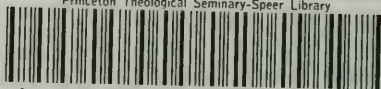
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